

FRANCISCINE CHRISTIAN

DRAWER

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PERSONAL FAITH

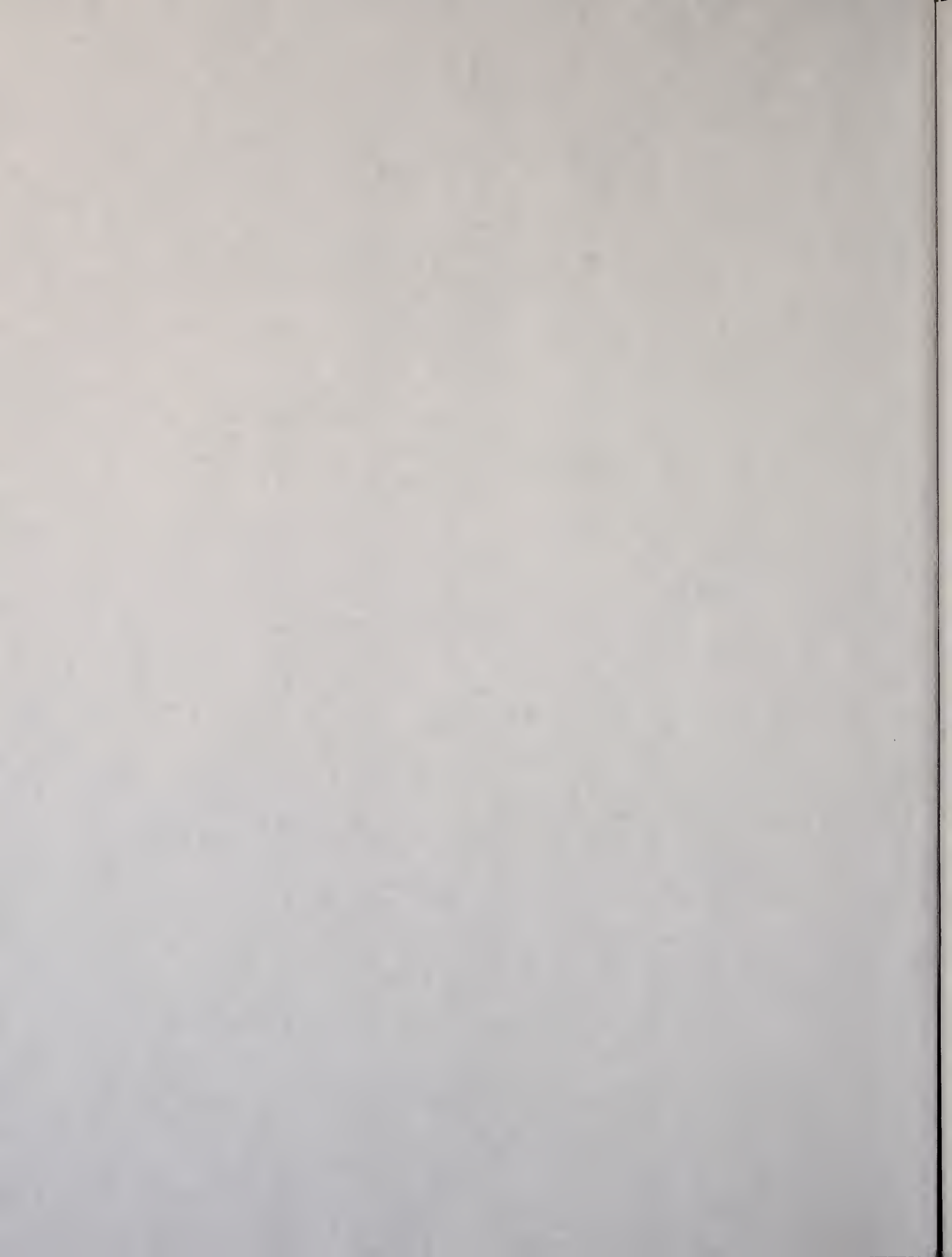
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Abraham Lincoln and religion

Practicing Christian

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



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Frederick Owen, a retired evangelist and biblical scholar in Colorado Springs, says he has found evidence that Abraham Lincoln became a practicing Christian after giving the Gettysburg Address. Mr. Owen, in a new book, "A Heart That Yearned for God," quotes Lincoln as telling friends after a visit to Gettysburg: "When I buried my son, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers,

I then and there consecrated my life to Christ." Many historians have speculated that Lincoln was a nonbeliever, but Mr. Owen said those views apparently arose from a "campaign smear" in the 1846 Congressional race in Illinois. Although Lincoln tried to rebut the charge, it followed him in his political career.
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March, 1945

LINCOLN, THE CHRISTIAN

By WILLIAM DALLMANN, D.D.

Thomas Lincoln and his cousin Nancy Hanks, then 23, were married by the Rev. Mr. Jesse Head on June 12, 1806, at the home of her uncle, Richard Berry, near Beechland, in Washington County, Kentucky.

On February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born in a one-room log cabin, without windows or doors, at Nolin's Creek, Hardin County, Kentucky.

Devout Christian Mother

When little Abe was eight, his parents moved into the wilds of Indiana. His mother knew her Bible and hymnal, and taught them to her boy. There was family worship and table prayers. Abe said his evening prayer at his mother's knee. The godly mother said, "I would rather Abe would be able to read the Bible than to own a farm if he can't have but one."

Little Abe's first letter was written to Parson David Elkins, a hundred miles away, to come and "preach a memorial service for my mother." It was done after some months.

Strongest Influence

In 1846 he said he was nine years old when his mother died; that his instruction by her in letters and morals, and especially the Bible stories, and the interest and love he acquired in reading the Bible through this teaching of his mother, had been the strongest and most influential experience in his life. The Bible she had read, and had taught him to read, was the greatest comfort he and his sister had after their mother was gone.

On December 2, 1819, Thomas Lincoln married the Widow Sally Bush Johnston. She made her new husband put down a floor in the rude cabin, and

hang windows and doors. She made the ill-used Abraham feel "like a human being"; her goodness touched his childish heart and taught him that blows and taunts and degradation were not to be his only portion in the world. Of her he says: "All I am or hope to be I owe to my sainted mother."

School

Lincoln's days in school did not amount to more than ten months in all. "Of course, when I came of age, I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all."

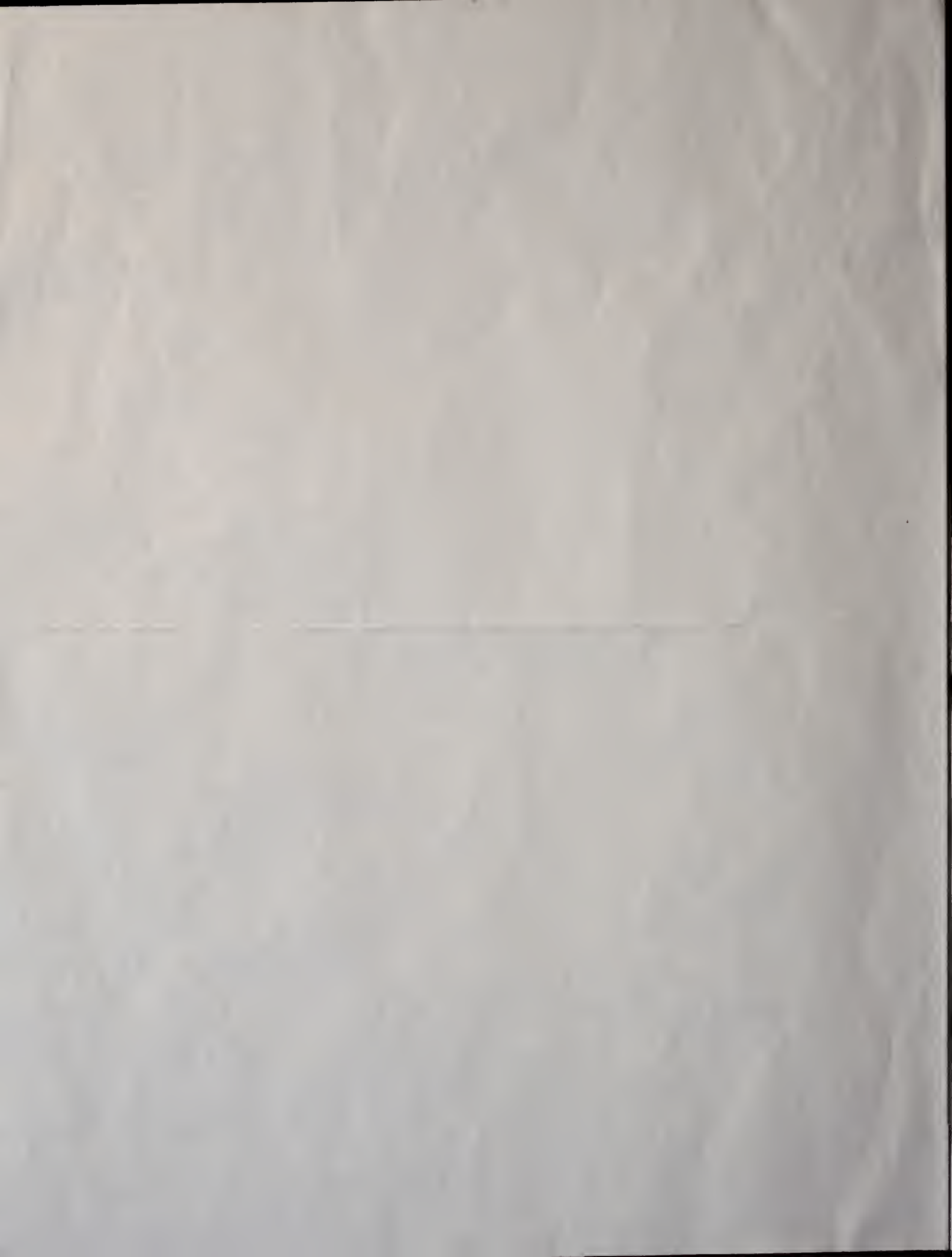
And yet he had a good education, a very good one, better than many a college graduate can boast. John Hanks says: "When Abe and I returned to the house from work, he would go to the cupboard, snatch a piece of cornbread, take down a book, sit down, cock his legs up high as his head, and read."

Bible Student

Under his stepmother's direction he read the Bible till he could recite many chapters. Next to the Bible, he knew his hymnal; his favorites were "Onward, Christian Soldiers," "How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours," "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood," and "Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed."

Voracious Reader

He knew the great English masterpiece, Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress*, also Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and Aesop's fables which he loved as much as did Luther, and Franklin's autobiography, and Shakespeare's works, and *The Revised Statutes of Indiana* with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States and the



Ordinances of 1787. Would that every boy had Abe's love of reading and course of reading; it is good for head and heart, for culture in a cabin, for a gentleman in jeans.

Seeing some drunken men, young Abe wrote an essay on temperance, and never again tasted liquor. His partner insisted on having whiskey in the store to draw customers, and when Lincoln objected in vain, he stepped out of the business. When notified of his nomination for the presidency, Lincoln said to the committee: "Gentlemen, we must pledge our mutual healths in the most healthful beverage which God has given unto man. It is the only beverage which I have ever used, or allowed in my family. And I cannot conscientiously depart from it on the present occasion. It is pure Adam's ale from the spring."

"Honest Abe"

When clerking for Denton Offutt, Lincoln walked three miles one evening after the store was closed to return a six-pence which had been overpaid. Another time he gave four ounces for half a pound of tea and delivered the difference before he slept. For this and other acts of the same sort he became known as "Honest Old Abe."

As a lawyer he would not take a case unless it was a good one. If his client was wrong, he tried to settle the dispute without going into court; if the evidence had been misrepresented to him, he would throw up the case in the midst of the trial and return the fee.

Bad Company

When Lincoln came to New Salem in Illinois in 1830, he fell in with a lot of rough infidels. In 1834 he read Volney's *Ruins* and Paine's *Age of Reason*. When he moved to Springfield in 1837, he read Hume and Gibbon and was in the company of scoffers. During these infidel years, Lincoln wrote silly and

very vulgar verses. He outraged the farmers by his buffoonery, making coarse and vulgar speeches in the form of sermons to the snickering field hands. Things have been published about him at this period that his friends would like to have forgotten or even unknown.

A change was coming over him.

In May, 1839, the Rev. James F. Jacquess, a Methodist, preached on "Ye must be born again," and he says: "I noticed that Mr. Lincoln appeared to be deeply interested in the sermon. A few days after that Sunday, Mr. Lincoln called on me and informed me that he had been greatly impressed with my remarks on Sunday and that he had come to talk with me further on the matter. I invited him in, and my wife and I talked and prayed with him for hours. Now, I have seen many persons converted; I have seen hundreds brought to Christ, and if ever a person was converted, Abraham Lincoln was converted that night in my house. . . . He never joined my church, but I will always believe that since that night Abraham Lincoln lived and died a Christian gentleman." — *Literary Digest*, Nov. 27, 1909, from *New York Christian Advocate*, from Minutes of the Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Reunion of Survivors of the 73rd Regiment, Illinois Infantry Volunteers, held in 1897.

In 1846, Lincoln ran for Congress against Peter Cartwright, the famous Methodist pioneer preacher, and was accused of being an infidel. Lincoln in private denied the charge absolutely, but he would not do so publicly, would not drag Jesus Christ upon the stump, it being a political matter, not a religious question. Later Cartwright testified to Lincoln's "Christian character."

"I Am Convinced"

Late in 1849, Pastor James Smith had a funeral sermon in Lincoln's family, and Lincoln read Smith's book on the

inspiration of the Bible. He himself said he examined the arguments as a lawyer investigates testimony in a case in which he is deeply interested and declared the argument unanswerable. "I am convinced of the truth of the Christian religion." He rented a pew at \$50.00 a year and sat in it with his family regularly for nearly seven years, till he went to Washington, and sent his children to Sunday School. He delivered the yearly address of the Springfield Bible Society in 1850. After drawing a contrast between the Ten Commandments and the most eminent lawgiver of antiquity, he said, "It seems to me that nothing short of infinite wisdom could by any possibility have devised and given to man this excellent and perfect moral code. It is suited to men in all the conditions of life, and inculcates all the duties they owe to their Creator, to themselves, and their fellow men."

Believed in the Atonement

Lincoln wrote a paper to show that the great injury of Adam's sin was made just and right by the Atonement of Christ.

In 1845 Lincoln turned over to his shiftless father a fee of \$35.00, though his whole income from a term of court did not exceed \$50.00 at that time.

When Lincoln heard of his father's serious sickness, he wrote to this stepbrother, John D. Johnston, on January 12, 1851: "Say to father that if it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyous meeting with many loved ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the help of God, hope ere long to join them."

"Christ Is God"

Lincoln could not understand how church members could vote against him, but said to Mr. Newman Bateman, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Illinois: "I know I am right, because I

know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God."

After Lincoln had helped a farm woman draw up her will, she asked him to read to her some chapter of the Bible. Waving aside the Book, he recited to her the 23rd Psalm and some others, the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel and other verses. Soon after the woman died in peace.

On the way back to Springfield, Lincoln's young companion broke a long silence by saying it was just wonderful how Lincoln had been not only a lawyer but also a pastor. Lincoln answered, "Heaven has been very near to me today."

After his election in 1860, Lincoln wrote to Judge Joseph Gillespie, "I have read on my knees the story of Gethsemane, where the Son of God prayed in vain that the cup of bitterness might pass from Him."

In his public addresses, in his private conversation, and in his letters, Lincoln clearly emphasized his faith in God. In the great historic journey which Lincoln took from Springfield, Ill., to Washington, to become President, he made many speeches and in all of them he told the people of his dependence on God for his work and trust in God for success.

In Washington, President Lincoln attended the Sunday services and even the weekly prayer meetings of Dr. Gurley's church.

Address to Committee of Lutherans

To a committee of Lutherans in May, 1862, Lincoln said: "I welcome here the representatives of the Evangelical Lutherans of the United States. I accept, with gratitude, their assurance of the sympathy and support of that enlightened, influential, and loyal class of my fellow citizens in an important crisis, which involves, in my judgment, not only the civil and religious liberties of our own dear land, but in a large degree

the civil and religious liberties of mankind in many countries, and through many ages. . . . You all may recollect that in taking up the sword thus forced into our hands, this government appealed to the prayers of the pious and the good, and declared that it placed its whole dependence upon the favor of God. I now humbly and reverently, in your presence reiterate the acknowledgment of that dependence. . . ."

He wrote Reverend Johnson on July 26, 1862: "I am a patient man, always willing to forgive on the Christian terms of repentance, and also to give ample time for repentance."

On September 13, 1862, to a deputation from all religious denominations of Chicago, he said: "Whatever appears to be God's will, I will do it."

Fervent Prayer During Campaigns

After the battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln on Sunday, July 5, 1863, called on the wounded General Daniel E. Sickles, when General James F. Rusling also came in. During the conversation, Sickles asked if he and the Cabinet had not been anxious about the battle. Lincoln replied that the Cabinet had, but he had not, and added that during the Gettysburg campaign he had gone to God in secret prayer. He said he told the Lord this was *His* country, and the war was *His* war, but that we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville; and that he then and there made a solemn vow with his Maker, that if He would stand by us at Gettysburg, he would stand by Him; and then he added: "And He *did* and *I will*." He said that after he had prayed he could not explain how it was, but a sweet comfort had crept into his soul that God Almighty had taken the whole business there into His hands, and we were bound to win at Gettysburg. He added that he did not want it repeated

then; some might laugh; but it was a solemn fact that he had prayed mightily over both Gettysburg and Vicksburg, and verily he believed our Heavenly Father was somehow going to take care of the American Republic.

At the time of this conversation, President Lincoln did not know that Vicksburg had already been captured.

Chittenden, quoting Lincoln: "That the Almighty does make use of human agencies, and directly intervenes in human affairs, is one of the plainest statements of the Bible. I have had so many evidences of His direction, so many instances when I have been controlled by some other power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this power comes from above."

In May, 1864, Lincoln said, "God bless all the churches, and blessed be God, who, in this our great trial, giveth us the churches."

In the same year he said to the Rev. J. T. Duryea, of New York: "I have always taken counsel of Him (God) and refer to Him my plans, and have never adopted a course of proceeding without being assured, as far as I could be, of His approbation."

Studied Bible with Aid of Concordance

"A. Lincoln, his own book" — that is written on the inside of the cover of an old copy of a well-thumbed Bible shown in the Lincoln Museum at Washington. Throughout life Lincoln was a close student of the Bible, and it was the one book above all others which formed his mind and heart. In all his early speeches as a lawyer at the bar and as a politician before the people, he quoted from the Bible more than from any other book, and he kept this up to the end of his life. Alexander Williamson, a tutor in Lincoln's family in Washington, said, "Mr. Lincoln very frequently studied the Bible, with the aid of Cruden's Con-

cordance, which lay on his table." Mr. Chittenden quotes Lincoln as follows: "I decided long ago that it was less difficult to believe that the Bible was what it claimed to be, than to disbelieve it."

After the Emancipation Proclamation, the colored people of Baltimore presented the President with a handsome copy of the Bible, and he responded as follows: "It is the best gift God has given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated through this book. All things most desirable for man's welfare here and hereafter are to be found in it."

Read Bible Before Lunch

Mrs. Rebecca R. Pomeroy, the nurse, writes: "I know nothing of his previous character before the war, but my 14 weeks in his family gave me a good insight of his daily life, not only all hours of the day, but when his meals were ready, and the troubled heart would give vent in tones not to be misunderstood. It was his custom when waiting for his lunch to take his mother's old worn-out Bible and lie on the couch and read, and one day he asked me what book I liked to read best; and I said, 'I am fond of the Psalms.' 'Yes,' said he to me, 'they are the best, for I find in them something for every day in the week!'"

When Lincoln's boy "Tad" (Thomas) was very sick, he said to the nurse, Mrs. Pomeroy: "I hope you will pray for him, and if it is God's will that he may be spared, and also for me, for I need the prayers of many."

Mrs. Pomeroy writes further: "The fourth day, and the sad duty done (that of laying his dear son out of sight), my heart prompted me to say, 'Look up for strength'; and he kindly answered, 'I shall go to God with my sorrows.'"

"The first four weeks that I was looking after little Tad, I was feeling exceedingly anxious about my boys, and

the President proposed taking me, every few days, to the hospital, that I might report to him how they felt when near death and what they thought of the future, and then I obtained permission to hold a prayer meeting in my ward, as the officers had strictly forbidden anyone to read or pray to the soldiers on a penalty of being 'dismissed from the service'; and, said the President, 'If there were more praying and less swearing, it would be better for our country, and we all need to be prayed for, officers as well as privates, and if I was near death I think I should like to hear prayer.'"

Mrs. Pomeroy also records that Lincoln prayed over Vicksburg, Gettysburg and Port Huron:

"Said I to this great, good man: 'Mr. Lincoln, prayer will do what nothing else will; can you not pray?' 'Yes, I will'; and while the tears were dropping from his haggard and worn-out face, he said, 'Pray for me.' And he went to his room, and could the nation have heard his earnest petition as the nurse did, they would have fallen on their knees in reverential sympathy. At 12 o'clock at night, while the soldiers were guarding the house, the sentinel, riding quickly, halted in front of the house with a telegram, and that was carried up to the President. In a few moments, after the door was opened and the President, in his night clothes, standing under the chandelier, with one of the sweetest expressions I ever saw him wear, said: 'Good news! Good news! Port Hudson is ours! The victory is ours and God is good!'"

"Said I to him: 'Nothing like prayer in times of trouble.' 'Yes, O yes, praise; for prayer and praise go together.'"

Greatest Work on Earth — Ambassador of Christ

Lincoln said to the Rev. Charles Chiniquy: "There is nothing as great under

heaven as to be an ambassador of Christ."

"I see no other safeguard against these murderers, but to be always ready to die, as Christ advises it."

"When I consider that law of justice and expiation in the death of the just, the divine Son of Mary, on the Mount of Calvary, I remain mute in my adoration."

Mr. Noah Brooks, the President's private secretary, writes that Lincoln loved Thomas Hood and Oliver Wendell Holmes for their pathos, and Longfellow's *Psalm of Life* and *The Birds of Killengworth*. He was an admirer of such philosophical works as Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion*, and could quote the exact chapter and verses of passages of the Bible, and freely expressed "his hope of a blessed immortality through Jesus Christ."

Blessings of Adversity

To an Illinois clergyman, Lincoln said in 1864: "When I left Springfield, I asked the people to pray for me; I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. I do love Jesus."

About a year before his death, Lincoln said to an infidel friend, Joshua Speed: "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a better man." Speed later joined the Church.

The Rev. Dr. Gurley, of Washington, writes: "In the latter days of his chastened and weary life, after the death of his son Willie, and his visit to the battlefield of Gettysburg, he said, with tears in his eyes, that he had lost confidence in everything but God, and that he now believed his heart was changed and that

he loved the Savior, and, if he was not deceived in himself, it was his intention soon to make a profession of religion."

Mr. Frank Carpenter, the painter of *The Emancipation Proclamation*, relates Lincoln told a member of the Christian Commission: "I think I can say with sincerity that I hope that I am a Christian. I had lived until my boy Willie died without fully realizing these things. That blow overwhelmed me. It showed me my weakness as I never felt it before, and if I can take what you have stated as a test, I think I can safely say that I know something of that change of which you speak. I will further add that it has been my intention for some time at a suitable opportunity to make a public religious confession."

Before the "suitable opportunity" came, the bullet of Booth laid Lincoln low in death.

On his last day, Lincoln said to his wife that he wanted to visit the Holy Land and see those places hallowed by the footprints of the Savior.

In the funeral sermon Bishop Simpson said: "He believed in Christ as the Savior of sinners."

Great Lessons

From the foregoing account, it is plain what a great blessing it is to have a godly mother. A woman's greatest right is to train her boy right.

Carlyle said that the best university is a collection of good books. To this university Lincoln went with a right good will. No matter how poor, every boy can go to this university.

It is plain that bad company led Lincoln away from the Bible teachings of his mother and stepmother, whom he himself calls his "saintly mother" and "angel of a mother."—"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Prov. 1:10.

Trouble, sickness, death, drove Lincoln to his knees and to Christ. Sweet

is the use of adversity. "Before I was afflicted I went astray. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." Ps. 119:67,71.

Lincoln wanted to confess Christ in public at some "suitable opportunity," but death cut him short. There is *always* a "suitable opportunity" to confess Christ before men: "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Hebr. 3:15.

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SUMMARY OF CHAPLAINS' ACTIVITIES

Cumulative Totals — December, 1941 to November, 1944

Religious Services	3,971,187
Attendance Upon Religious Services	240,516,009
Communion and Sacramental Participants	30,420,189
Guardhouse and Hospital Visits	2,976,385
Pastoral Activities — Functional Occasions	23,569,924
Pastoral Contacts — Persons Reached	214,498,686
Civilian Communities — Functional Occasions ...	891,110
Contacts — Persons Reached	71,907,248

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Office of the Chief of Chaplains

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Mailing Addresses of
Men in the

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Bay Area Church News

Man Without a Church

Our 'Most Religious' President---Lincoln

Washington

In all of its history, the United States has had only one President who was not a member of any church. His name was Abraham Lincoln.

It is ironic that Lincoln should have this particular distinction, for he was "unquestionably our most religious President," says the Rev. Dr. William J. Wolf, a Lincoln scholar and professor of theology at the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass.

In a book entitled "The Religion of Abraham Lincoln" (Seabury Press), Dr. Wolf explodes many of the myths that have gained circulation during the past century about Lincoln's religious views. He shows that Lincoln was not—as he has been described at various times as being—an "infidel," a Deist, a Quaker, a Roman Catholic, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, a Disciple of Christ or a Spiritualist.

DISTRUST

Lincoln never joined a church because he distrusted attempts to institutionalize religion and to compress the teachings of Jesus Christ into what he called "man-made creeds and dogmas." He often said that he would not join a church until he found one whose sole qualification for membership was Christ's summary of the great commandment:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

But Lincoln's religion was not a formless "faith in faith." He was a "Biblical Christian" who drew guidance from the Scriptures



Lecturer

A former Air Corps intelligence officer and oil company executive will give a one-hour lecture Sunday on "Man Unlimited."

The speaker, William Alton, is on the Christian Science Board of Lectureship. He will speak at the Third Church of Christ, Scientist, at 3 p. m. at 1250 Haight street.

not only for his private life but also for the great decisions he had to make as President.

THEOLOGIAN

"The rock on which he stood was the Bible," says Dr. Wolf. "No President has ever had the detailed knowledge of the Bible that Lincoln had."

"The simplest description of his religion would be 'single-hearted integrity in humbly seeking to understand God's will in the affairs of men and his own responsibility therein.'"

"In this sense, Lincoln is one of the greatest theologians of America—not in the technical meaning of producing a system of doctrine, certainly not as the defender of some one denomination, but in the sense of seeing the hand of God intimately in the affairs of nations." Dr. Wolf cites the Emancipation Proclamation as an example of Lincoln's almost mystical

sense of divine guidance in national policy.

When Union Armies were hard pressed in the battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln spent long hours on his knees in prayer. He later told his cabinet, according to the diary of his Navy Secretary, Gideon Welles, that "he had made a vow, a covenant, that if God gave us the victory in the battle, he would consider it his duty to move forward in the cause of emancipation."

Welles indicated that Lincoln was a little embarrassed at revealing this private vow to God, but was "firmly fixed in his mind" about carrying it out.

"We might think it strange," he said, but there were times when he felt uncertain how to act; that he had in this way submitted the disposal of matters when the way was not clear in his mind what he should do. God had decided this question in favor of the slave," Welles wrote.

GOD'S SIDE

As this incident shows, Lincoln was a great believer in prayer. But, Dr. Wolf emphasizes, "For Lincoln, the purpose of prayer was not to get God to do man's bidding but to place man where he might come to see God's purposes and to experience the strength of relying on the everlasting arm."

Lincoln himself made this point quite vehemently on one occasion during the Civil War, when a delegation of clergymen told him unctuously that the Union was sure of victory because "God is on our side."

"My concern," said Lincoln, "is not to get God on my side, but to be quite sure that I am on God's side."

United Press

Was Believer, But Joined No Church

Abraham Lincoln, who now belongs to the ages, was a religious man but never held church membership.

This association without affiliation may appear strange in today's Christian world but hardly so in the generation of the backwoodsmen who become Civil

War President of the United States, it was disclosed recently to the Guild of Trinity English Lutheran Church by Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation here.

The Foundation, known all over the country, is one of the world's great centers of Lincoln research. Dr. McMurtry's subject was "Lincoln and His Religion."

Dr. McMurtry pointed out in the beginning that Lincoln has become a permanent and exalted figure in the history of the world and this attaches a special significance to the impact of religion upon his life.

As a youth, Lincoln served as sexton of the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church in Spencer County, Ind. As a young man beginning the practice of law in Illinois Lincoln became a doubter for a time, during which he reportedly was moved to some writing on the subject of agnosticism. If these writings existed, they were destroyed; vaguely these writings have been referred to at various times as "the burned book."

The man with whom Lin-

pointed reference to this in writing of Lincoln).

Churches were not so numerous then, and to many of the early settlers religious services were not consistently available.

Lincoln was raised in a Baptist home and an interesting facet of his childhood is recorded by World Book. At the time of his mother's death in Southern Indiana, no minister was available to conduct funeral services and Mrs. Lincoln was buried without rites. This so disturbed the nine-year-old Lincoln that the father arranged for formal services over his wife's grave when a clergyman became available several months later.

Dr. McMurtry separated Lincoln's life into four religious phases: as a child, as a young man, as a man in politics and

as President of the United States.

Because of limited outlets for social life in the early 19th Century, he went on, people often gathered to debate or discuss various issues. One of the subjects tossed out before a Kentucky church congregation was the hypothetical Indian massacre of five members of a family of seven. The father and one child escaped: the father was captured but the hiding place of the son could not be found by the Indians.

Should the father disclose the hiding place of his son or lie to his captors?

The debate became so heated that the congregation split and formed separate churches, which exist to this day.

Lincoln once remarked that he could entertain church affiliation if all the credos were exemplified by "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

Continued On Page 5E.

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As a youth, Lincoln served as sexton of the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church in Spencer County, Ind. As a young man beginning the practice of law in Illinois Lincoln became a doubter for a time, during which he reportedly was moved to some writing on the subject of agnosticism. If these writings existed, they were destroyed, vaguely these writings have been referred to at various times as "the burned book."

The man with whom Lincoln was associated in the early practice of law was an agnostic, which might have influenced his thought on the subject.

Later, when he became involved in Illinois state politics, he was described as a scoffer by an opponent and countered with widely-distributed handbills affirming his belief in the deity. This expression, apparently, allayed all subsequent controversy about Lincoln's religious convictions.

In Lincoln's day, church membership became a domestic issue after the young man had taken a wife and settled down. Indeed, church membership was by invitation in those days.

There was much bickering among denominations of that day, and even within them, in contrast with the ecumenical movements of today, and this may have had an influence upon Lincoln's feeling toward church affiliation.

[Researchers for the World Book Encyclopedia make a

pointed reference to this in writing of Lincoln].

Churches were not so numerous then, and to many of the early settlers religious services were not consistently available.

Lincoln was raised in a Baptist home and an interesting facet of his childhood is recorded by World Book. At the time of his mother's death in Southern Indiana, no minister was available to conduct funeral services and Mrs. Lincoln was buried without rites. This so disturbed the nine-year-old Lincoln that the father arranged for formal services over his wife's grave when a clergyman became available several months later.

Dr. McMurtry separated Lincoln's life into four religious phases: as a child, as a young man, as a man in politics and

as President of the United States.

Because of limited outlets for social life in the early 19th Century, he went on, people often gathered to debate or discuss various issues. One of the subjects tossed out before a Kentucky church congregation was the hypothetical Indian massacre of five members of a family of seven. The father and one child escaped; the father was captured but the hiding place of the son could not be found by the Indians.

Should the father disclose the hiding place of his son or lie to his captors?

The debate became so heated that the congregation split and formed separate churches, which exist to this day.

Lincoln once remarked that he could entertain church affiliation if all the creeds were exemplified by "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

Continued On Page 5E.

Abe Lincoln And His Religion

Continued From Page 1E. soul and might, and thy neighbor as thyself."

Years ago a minister visiting the little Pigeon Creek Church discovered a record in the attic of Lincoln's service there as a sexton. It was an inventory sheet signed by "A. Lincoln." He did not think to remove or otherwise preserve this record, and subsequently it was lost to history.

During his lifetime, the Civil War president is known to have made 77 references to the Bible, Dr. McMurtry informed, covering 22 books—16 of them in the Old Testament. His references to Christ were few— as "The Saviour."

Lincoln is known to have attended church, but not regularly. As President of the

United States, when he bore a burden perhaps greater than any other man in history, Lincoln's religious life entered a distinct and final phase. The Bible was kept handy on his desk.

Mary Todd Lincoln was an Episcopalian, but by coincidence, a clergyman of that faith was not available when their son William Wallace II, died in the White House. Mrs. Lincoln arranged for a prominent Presbyterian minister to conduct the services.

Both developed an attachment for his cleric, particularly Mr. Lincoln, and they attended services in his church.

Later, while visiting his wife's relatives in Lexington,

Ky., Lincoln was further impressed by the Presbyterian clergyman: in his father-in-law's library he found a religious work authored by the Washington minister.

Religious reflections from Lincoln's eventful life have led many denominations to claim him in theory, but there is no evidence that he ever held a church membership.

Except for a brief, questioning period, an experience that comes in the lives of many, Abraham Lincoln was a man of deep religious convictions, although he never affiliated with a church.

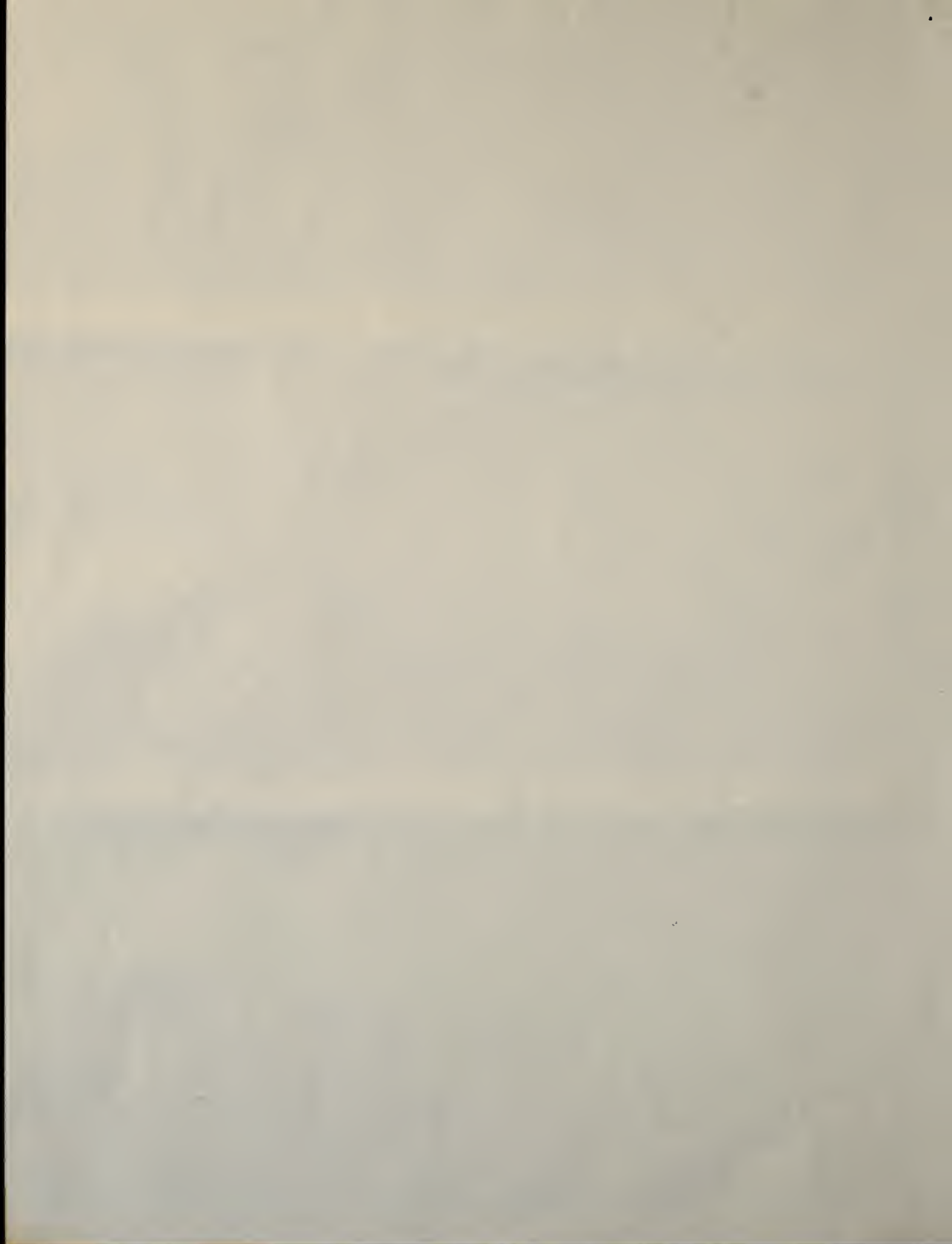
As one to become a man of the ages, it might have been his destiny to find his God wherever he worshipped.

"WAS LINCOLN A CHRISTIAN?"

A Sermon Preached
February 8, 1976

First Presbyterian Church
Grand Haven

Frederick H. Olert



Was Lincoln A Christian?

In February, our five sermons are presented against the background of Americana. This is the season which marks the birthday anniversaries of some of our great Americans, especially George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Even more we observe the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Republic. Our Presbyterian leaders have suggested that in local churches we celebrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ, probe the American myth, and renew our civil covenants.

Once a year on a Sunday or Wednesday nearest the anniversary of Lincoln's birth, it has become customary in many of our churches to consider some phase of Lincoln's life. I recall occasions when I preached on "Lincoln's Abrahamic Faith" and "Lincoln, Man of God."

There are 6500 books about Lincoln as well as innumerable articles, poems, and plays. There has been more written about Lincoln than any other President of the United States and more than all of them combined.

Nearly all writers and critics agree that Abraham Lincoln was our greatest President because of universal acclaim. The world has built a halo about his memory. The picture of Lincoln hangs on the walls of more colleges and universities, on the walls of more diets, parliaments, and congresses the world over than any other single American. And by the test of quotability, Lincoln is more widely quoted everywhere in the world than any other American.

Abraham Lincoln was such a man as God gives to the world only once in every 500 years. John Buchan who writes under the name of Lord Tweedmuir once said that Lincoln was one of three or four greatest men to be born of Anglo-Saxon blood. John Morley who wrote the best life of William E. Gladstone, one of the greatest Prime Ministers of Britain wrote that the miracle of England was that a small island country could have produced so great a man. By the same token, the miracle of America is that the backwoods of Kentucky could have produced so great a man as Lincoln. A General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in annual meeting was once asked to name the greatest English speaking man. There was a moment of solemn silence and then unanimously they said it was Lincoln. Carl Sandburg on one of Lincoln's anniversaries spoke to the United States Congress in which he said: "Millions there are who take Lincoln as a personal treasure. He had something they would like to see all over the earth. They cannot find words to express it but he had it. It was there in the lights and shadows of his personality."

Today we address ourselves to the question: Was Lincoln a Christian? The answer to that question depends on what you mean by being a Christian. If you mean an active enrolled member of a Christian Church, then of course the answer must be negative. For, while Lincoln expressed the intention of uniting with the church if his life had been spared, the assassin's bullet cut short his life before the step was taken. As far as we know, Lincoln died outside the membership of the church.

I.

Perhaps we ought to face at the outset the question why Lincoln never became a church professing Christian. All through his life he manifested a constant belief in the church as a divine institution. In his early life he was associated with the Baptists, for his mother's funeral he engaged a Methodist minister, an Episcopal rector performed his marriage to Mary Todd, but during his life in Springfield, Illinois and in Washington, D.C. his denominational preferences seemed to be with the Presbyterians. He was a regular and interested worshipper with the Presbyterians in Springfield and in the nations capital. The First Presbyterian Church in Springfield and the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington have Lincoln pews - a shrine within a shrine. One day during the Civil War in response to the greeting of a company of ministers Lincoln said: "Blessed be God who in this trial giveth us the churches."

During the war an order was issued by the military authorities conscripting all the churches in Washington. The order was read from the pulpit of the New York Avenue Church by Dr. Gurley, the minister. Lincoln arose immediately in his pew and countermanded the order stating, "We need the churches too much to close them." Lincoln attended the weekly prayer meeting in the Washington Church, although for purposes of privacy, he sat in an adjoining room away from the public eye, but where he could listen in on the prayers and testimonies. As a mark of respect, Lincoln usually stood reverently in his pew while the minister led the congregation in the pastoral prayer. Two of his favorite hymns were:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

Amazing grace - how sweet the sound -
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind and now I see.

II.

There are several reasons advanced why Lincoln never became a church member. When he was a boy he attended a revival meeting in the backwoods of the early frontier. The preacher went on an emotional spree with shouting, shrieking, sobbing, trembling and wringing his hands. Lincoln looked on, sober of face, quiet of heart, and exceedingly thoughtful. He was not unsympathetic to religion or the Bible. He had already caught something of the Bible's passion for justice, mercy, and humility. But the extravagant methods of early revivalism were revolting to him, although he maintained a discreet silence.

As a young man Lincoln read Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" which disclosed to him that much of the religion of his day was scarcely intellectually defensible. Lincoln was by disposition no easy "joiner." He exercised a very sharp discrimination in the sham and hypocrisy of religion. A margin of reserve qualified many of his actions and decisions.

Lincoln also found himself unable to accept the long and objectional creeds of the church to which he felt he must subscribe if he joined. There is an impressive remark reputed to have been made by Lincoln that whenever a church inscribed over its altar the sole qualification for membership the Savior's condensed statement of the law and the gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind and thy neighbor as thyself," he would join that church. Dr. Gurley must have told Mr. Lincoln that the sole requisite for membership in the Presbyterian Church is an honest profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But Lincoln evidently felt that church membership must be taken with no mental reservations to anything stated in the creeds and confessions of the church.

Another reason why Lincoln may have remained outside the church was the tolerance and even sanction by so many of the churches of his day. He naturally expected the sympathy and support of Christian people in his battle for the freedom of the black man. Instead he found the church in slave-holding states ruled by slaveholders. In 1860 he said, "The very teachers of religion defend slavery from the Bible and claim for it divine approval." Lincoln felt there was a moral aspect to this great political question which the church should have considered. When Lincoln learned that only three of the twenty-three ministers in Springfield were favorable to his elections he was crushed. "These men well know that I am for freedom and that my opponent is for slavery, and yet with the New Testament in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they vote against me. I do not understand it at all."

Mr. Lincoln is said to have liked Dr. Gurley because he preached religion and not politics of which he had enough six days a week. Dr. Gurley was with Lincoln when his little son, Willie, died, and was with Lincoln when he breathed his last on Good Friday of 1865. There is a testimony of a Mrs. Lauck of Orange, New Jersey, to the effect that Dr. Gurley had told her that Lincoln had intended to make public profession of faith in Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday and unite with the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, which intention was cut short by death two days before.

Regardless of whether Lincoln united with the church or not, his moral life was the life of a Christian. John Morley once wrote, "We believe in no man's infallibility; it is restful to believe in one man's integrity. On one occasion Lincoln said: "You may burn my body to ashes, scatter them to the four winds of earth; you may drag down my soul to the pit of hell to be tormented forever, but you will never get me to stand for a measure I believe to be wrong." Lincoln never drank or smoked, was deeply concerned about the Sabbath, attended and supported the church, read his Bible diligently, and was known as a man of prayer.

III.

The second question we confront is this: Is it possible for a man to be converted by the grace of God and to experience a change of heart without being definitely enrolled in a church? If so, Lincoln was a real though not an enrolled Christian. The simplest answer to this question is found in the testimony of Dr. James F. Jaquess of Springfield, who stated that Mr. Lincoln and a party came to his church one Sunday. They were seated on chairs in the front of the church. The text of the sermon on that day was, "Ye must be born again." Lincoln was deeply interested. A few days later Lincoln called on the minister to discuss the matter with him further. As a result of the conversation Dr. Jaquess said, "I have seen many persons converted; if ever a person was converted, Abraham Lincoln was that day in my house."

Lincoln felt deeply on matters of eternity and the soul, but his tenderness and the humility of his nature did not permit him to speak of personal religious matters except on rare occasions to intimate friends.

There is also on record a conversation between Mr. Lincoln and a prominent Christian woman. He told her he had a high regard for her Christian character and hence asked her to give him in brief her idea of what constituted a true religious experience. After listening attentively to her answer, he said, "If what you have told me is really correct, I think I can say that I hope I am a Christian. I have lived until my boy Willie died without fully realizing these things That blow overwhelmed me. It showed me my weakness as I have never felt it before, and, if I can take what you have stated as a test, I think I can safely say that I know something of that change of which you speak. I will further add that it has been my intention for some time at a suitable opportunity to make a public religious profession "

Shortly before his death a clergyman asked Lincoln, "Do you love Jesus?" Lincoln solemnly replied, "When I left Springfield I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, I do love Jesus." Dr. Gurley, the pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church where Lincoln had a pew, had frequent intimate conversations with him on the subject of the Christian faith and considered him a sound Christian.

IV.

There are two other matters that have a bearing on Lincoln's Christian life: his attitude to the Scriptures and his practice of prayer.

Abraham Lincoln knew and loved the Bible. No president ever used the Bible more than Lincoln. God's Word was to him the touchstone by which his judgment on every question was decided. His official pronouncements and his papers of State sound more like pages from Isaiah than like the documents of government. His memory was stored with great portions of the Sacred Volume. He considered it the best gift God has given to men. Nearly one-third of his Second Inaugural Address is made up of Biblical language and thought. Said Mr. Lincoln, "Accept all of the Bible you can on reason and the rest on faith, and you will live and die a better man."

There was something Abrahamic about Lincoln's faith. He was a man of prayer, frequently driven to his knees in the consciousness that there was nowhere else to go. There are three episodes in his life which speak for themselves:

1. Springfield, February 10, 1861 - Lincoln was standing on the rear platform of a train about to leave Springfield. Overhead are leaden skies. He knows the gravity of the hour. Then he speaks,

"My friends, no one not in my position can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and to the kindness of this people I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young man to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one lies buried. I now leave, not knowing whether, if ever, I may return, and with a task greater than Washington before me. Without the assistance of the Divine Being I cannot succeed; with that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me and remain with you and can be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope all will yet be well, to His care commending you as I hope your prayers commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

2. The scene is at Washington. Mr. Lincoln is giving his Second Inaugural:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by bondmen's two hundred fifty years of unrequited toil be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid for by another drawn by the sword,--as it was three thousands years ago so still must it be said the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

3. Lincoln wrote a letter to Mrs. Bixby of Boston, Massachusetts. On the walls of Brasenose College, Oxford University, England, this letter of the "rail-splitter" President hangs as a model of purest English, rarely, if ever, surpassed:

"Dear Madam, I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom. Yours very sincerely and respectfully, A. Lincoln."

Lincoln believed mightily in God, eternal truth and justice. He recognized the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proved by all history that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. He believed that the will of God prevails. He had registered a solemn oath in heaven to finish the work in which he engaged in full view of his responsibility to God, with malice toward none and with charity for all. "I know I am right because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God."

A shepherd boy like David, the poet of ancient days, Edwin Markham tended sheep on the hills of California. One morning after a storm he saw a great gap against the sky where a tree had gone down. Half a century later when reaching for a figure to describe the grief of a nation over the death of Lincoln he used that figure,

"And when he fell a whirlwind, he went down
As when a kingly cedar green with boughs
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky."

Lincoln, such a man as God gives to the world only once every five hundred years, went down on Good Friday of 1865 and left a lonesome place against the sky. Every person, every American, every Christian, can find in him an adequate ideal.

FREEDOMCLUB *Report*

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 2 • FEBRUARY 1994

The rewriting of Abe Lincoln

Lincoln's Christianity ignored by modern scholars

The single figure from all American history that evokes more fascination than any other is Abraham Lincoln. Again this February, the 186th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, there will be articles and TV specials.

But in testimony to how American history has been rewritten with a secular twist, few will mention Lincoln's deep Christian commitment. And none will reveal how Lincoln openly allowed his Christianity to influence policy and make the White House a pulpit for a biblical view of government.

One of the tragedies of modern secular scholarship is the widespread impression that Lincoln kept religion at a safe distance or that he was even a skeptic toward Christianity. Yet this actually forms the catalyst for one of the little-known dramas of American history: the conversion of Abraham Lincoln.

OPPONENT OF THE BIBLE Lincoln was raised in a Calvinistic Baptist background. While there were signs that his father and step-mother took their faith seriously, there was never any hint that Abraham Lincoln's childhood faith was more than nominal.



As he developed from laborer to store clerk to renowned and prosperous Illinois attorney, all histories show two traits: One, that Lincoln was an introspective and at times troubled, even depressed, individual. Two, that he was a voracious reader, and a deep and brooding thinker who pondered ultimate questions such as the nature and pur-

pose of the universe.

The evidence is fairly strong that once out on his own, Lincoln became at least a skeptic, perhaps even an opponent of Christianity. There is evidence that he drafted a booklet attempting to refute the core beliefs of the Bible, under the influence of popular skeptical writers such as Voltaire, Thomas Paine, and the early evolutionist Volney. From this period of his life spring the assertions, later printed by his former law partner William Herndon, that Lincoln was a lifelong scoffer.

Herndon, in fact, is the primary source of the "Lincoln the skeptic" portrait painted by secular academics. Overlooked by these historians: overwhelming evidence that Herndon focused only on Lincoln's life before about —continue on page 3

Lincoln openly allowed his Christianity to influence policy and make the White House a pulpit for a biblical view of government.



1850; that Herndon himself was a vigorous and bitter enemy of Christianity; a mountain of evidence pointing to a profound and dramatic turnaround in Lincoln's position.

Sifting through the written testimonies of those who knew Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois and Washington, D.C., the following is a thumbnail sketch of what probably occurred.¹

CHAMPION OF THE

BIBLE Lincoln's skepticism had been muted somewhat by marriage and his political ambitions. Yet while his wife became a church attender, Lincoln remained unchurched until 1850. At that time two events occurred to change that — the death of Lincoln's son Eddie, and his acquaintance with Dr. James Smith, the new pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Springfield.

Smith was the perfect foil for Lincoln. In 1840, he had gained renown for publicly debating the well-known atheist C. G. Olmstead. Smith's defense of the innerrancy of the Bible and the veracity of key Christian doctrines was published in book form, *A Christian's Defense*. A lawyer friend of Lincoln's, Thomas Lewis, was an elder in the church and introduced the two men. Not only did Smith ably console the despondent Lincoln regarding his son, but Lincoln accepted Smith's challenge to read *A Christian's Defense* from an attorney's perspective, and discuss at length the case for Christianity.

The result was that Lincoln soon proclaimed himself to be a believer in

¹Sources for this account include *Milestones to Immortality* by Dr. Watson Pindell (Baltimore: Role Models, Inc., 1988), *Abraham Lincoln: Man of God* by John W. Hill (New York: Putnam's, 1920), and *The Faith of Abraham Lincoln* by D. Raymond Taggart (Topeka: Service Print Shop, 1943). All are extremely well researched and documented.



Christianity. He became a fixture at First Presbyterian in Springfield, a highly fundamentalist church, attending Sunday and mid-week.

Most amazingly, although he never joined the church, Lincoln apparently taught a public seminar in about 1852 giving a lengthy defense of the Bible from the standpoint of legal proofs.

It is also known that he delivered an address to the Bible Society of Springfield urging a campaign to have a Bible placed in every home in the state.

No evidence exists, not even from Herndon, that Lincoln ever claimed skepticism after that point.

FEELING HEAVEN'S HAMMER But was he truly converted at that time — truly, in the words of Jesus, born again? The answer may be no.

Lincoln himself told several people that he continued to struggle with perceived hypocrisy in institutional Christianity, and with reconciling doctrines such as God's sovereignty and human free will. He reportedly was incensed at the failure of Springfield ministers to take a stand against the spread of slavery, which Lincoln saw as a spiritual matter, not just political. He continued to resist official church membership.

Of course, such struggles describe the spiritual odyssey of many Christians. Yet Lincoln later gave indication that he was unwilling, at that time, to fully accept and submit to a God with whom he often did not see eye-to-eye. He later suggested to friends that while he had an intellectual grasp of and agreement with Christianity, he had no *personal* assurance of his own salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Three powerful hammer blows apparently combined to purge that stubbornness. The first was the —continue on page 8

Lincoln apparently taught a public seminar in about 1852, giving a lengthy defense of the Bible from the standpoint of legal proofs. He also delivered an address to the Bible Society of Springfield, Illinois urging a campaign to have a Bible placed in every home in the state.

Photos of Lincoln provided by The Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne, Indiana, a part of Lincoln National Corp.

"...after the death of his son Willie and his visit to the battlefield of Gettysburg, he said, with tears in his eyes, that he had lost confidence in

crushing burden of the presidency, which by all accounts drove Lincoln to his knees daily, caused him to visit famed clergymen — often in secret — for prayer and counsel, and made the Bible his pocket companion at all times.

The second hammer blow was the death of another son, Willie, in 1863. Copious testimony exists documenting the alarm by those in government over Lincoln's mental and emotional state following this event. Many feared for his sanity. He even permitted a seance. Yet Lincoln apparently found final solace only in extended investigations of the Bible and meetings with Christian ministers.

eyes, that he had lost confidence in everything but God, and that he now believed his heart was changed and that he loved the Saviour.

A member of the Washington Christian Commission testified that Lincoln asked her to define a Christian. When she did, he told her, "I had lived until my boy Willie died without fully realizing these things. That blow overwhelmed me. It showed me my weakness as I had never felt it before, and if I can take what you stated as a test, I think I can safely say that I know something of the change of which you speak."

Lincoln's close friend, journalist Noah Brooks, wrote in 1878,

I have had many conversations with Mr. Lincoln which were more or less of a religious character; and while I never tried to draw anything like a statement of his views from him, yet he frequently expressed himself to me as having a blessed hope of immortality through Jesus Christ....His language seemed not that of an inquirer, but of one who had a prior settled belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion.

POLITICALLY INCORRECT ABE

Why the aversion by historians to these well-documented realities? Most likely, they resist because Lincoln actively incorporated his faith into government in a way that today would be considered scandalous.

On no fewer than nine occasions Lincoln called the nation to *officially* observe days of *religious* humiliation, thanksgiving, prayer, or fasting. He did more than pepper his speeches with "God talk." Instead, he *framed* important policy addresses in Christian theology. His second inaugural is the greatest example.

Lincoln, the legal expert, saw no separation of religion and government. Indeed, he saw that without political acknowledgement of biblical truths, there could be no free government in America. It is up to believers today to honor his birth by pursuing that living legacy.



FINAL SURRENDER

The third hammer blow fell shortly after: his visit to the awful yet inspiring battlefield cemetery at Gettysburg. During his stay in Washington Lincoln was a regular Sunday attender of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. It is

also a well-established fact that Lincoln attended mid-week prayer meetings, even praying concealed in an anteroom during sessions when his presence became a distraction. The church pastor was Dr. Phineas Gurley, his close friend and breakfast partner. Gurley later wrote:

...I consider him sound, not only in the truths of the Christian religion, but on all the fundamental doctrines and teachings; and more than that, in the later days of his chastened and weary life, after the death of his son Willie and his visit to the battlefield of Gettysburg, he said, with tears in his

everything but God, . . . and that he loved the Savior."

DR. PHINEAS GURLEY,
LINCOLN'S PASTOR
AND CLOSE FRIEND.

May 27, 1998

Gabriel L Shaheen
President and CEO

Mr. Donald R. Crowe
Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church
Employees Association
c/o Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church
5555 North Federal Highway
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308

Lincoln National Life Insurance Co.
1300 S. Clinton St.
P.O. Box 1110
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-1110
phone 219 455-2270
fax 219 455-6333
gshaheen@lnc.com

Dear Mr. Crowe:

This letter is in response to your letter of April 16, 1998 regarding our policy of providing benefits to same sex partners. I apologize for the delay in getting back with you, but there seems to have been a mix up in the mailing of your letter. We did not receive your letter until Mr. Collier faxed us a copy of it on May 18.

Mr. Crowe, we value our relationship with you and we value it enough that I wanted to personally respond to your letter.

Our decision to offer benefits to same sex partners has nothing to do with the issue of the morality of homosexuality but instead is rooted in two values that we share at Lincoln National. The first is one of fairness. We do not make moral judgements with respect to the extension of benefits to our heterosexual employees; and, therefore, we think it is inappropriate for us to make moral judgement regarding the practices of our non-heterosexual employees. We believe we must offer fair treatment to all employees and agents who do their jobs with competence and lead productive lives in their communities.

The other shared value which dictated this decision is one of diversity. We believe it is inappropriate for an employer to cause any group of its employees to feel persecuted. In addition, we operate in an increasingly diverse marketplace, and we believe that our employee base needs to reflect the diversity of the markets where we operate.

Lincoln National is clearly not on the leading edge of the companies who offer this benefit. Virtually 500 other corporations have done so and the list continues to grow. It will be more and more difficult to disassociate from companies including IBM, Xerox, American Express, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, Kodak Company, Levi Strauss, and Disney who have also made this decision. Your organization very likely has a computer that uses IBM, Hewlett Packard or Microsoft products.

Mr. Donald R. Crowe
May 27, 1998
Page 2

Your request that we not impose any withdrawal fees or surrender charges, unfortunately, cannot be honored. The surrender charges are designed to cover acquisition costs such as underwriting, plan set-up and commissions paid to the agent of record. When a contract is terminated prior to the period of time needed to recoup these costs, the surrender charges are applied.

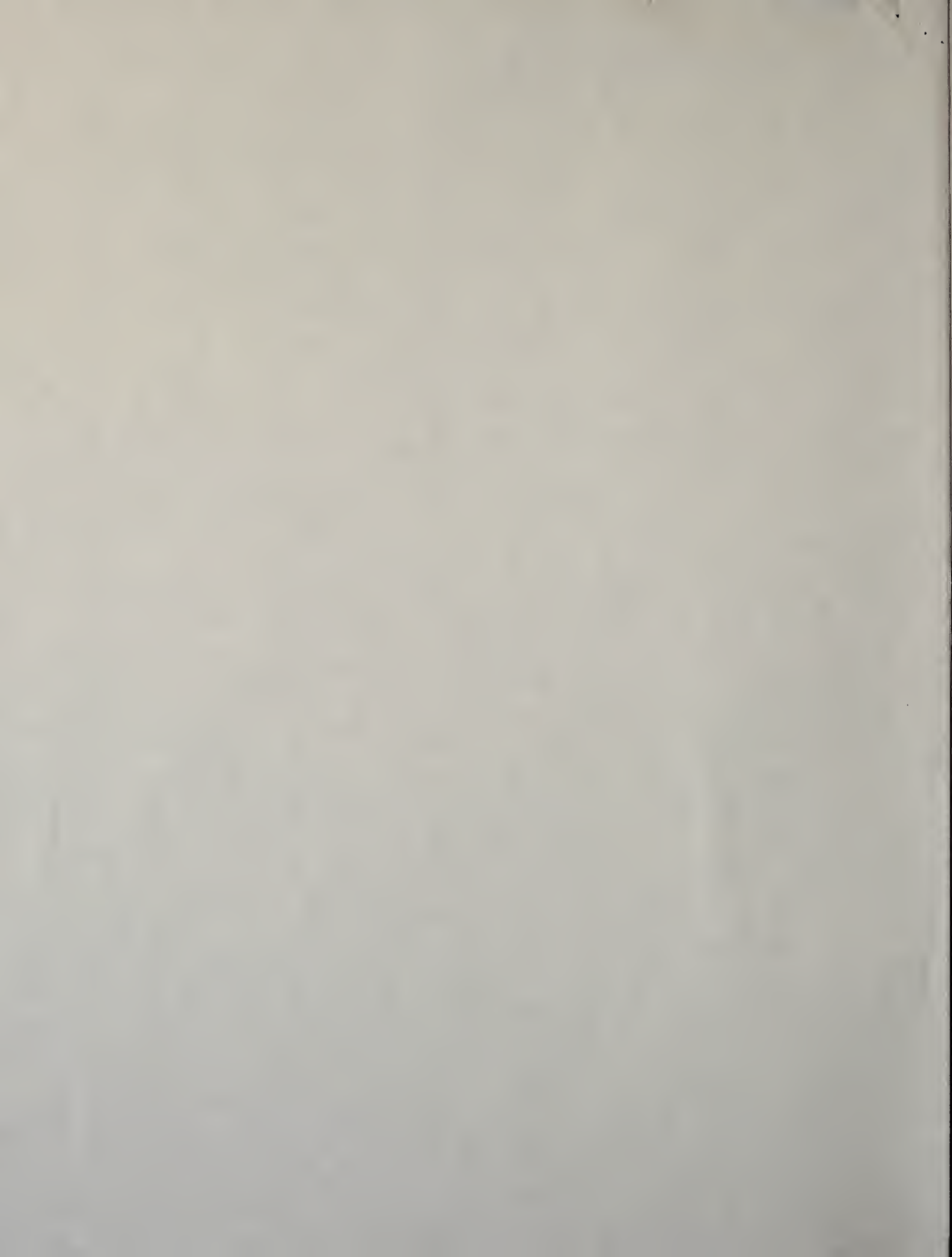
Despite the amount of money that individuals and businesses pay in taxes, there is a great need for the work of the churches and for philanthropy on the part of businesses and individuals. Lincoln National takes its responsibility very seriously, committing a percentage of its pretax income to provide support for social services, education, and the arts. Lincoln National, since its founding in 1905, has built its business reflecting the integrity of our namesake, Abraham Lincoln. We go out of our way to be an exemplary corporate citizen in the communities in which our employees live and work. We are continually the leading contributor in support of social services in our home city.

Mr. Crowe, I do appreciate your writing and provide this letter to help you understand Lincoln National a bit more thoroughly. I hope you will continue to allow us to meet your financial service needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Douglas Collier", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

cc: Douglas Collier



Dawn L. Crowe, et al
c/o Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church
5555 North Federal Highway
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33308
(954) 771-8840 X 668

June 7, 1998

LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INS. CO.	
Office of Gabe Shaheen	
Recd.	JUN 26 1998
Referred To	

Mr. Gabriel L. Shaheen, President

Lincoln National Life Corporation
1300 South Clinton Street
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

Dear Mr. Shaheen:

Thank you for your thoughtful reply to our letter of April 16, 1998. We apologize for the delay in getting that letter to you, which was the result of a secretarial error. At any rate, you must realize that your letter was not responsive to our request, and left many of us no alternative but to cancel our contracts with your firm. However, we did not want to curtail our business without responding to the points offered in your letter.

First, you urge that your firm's "...decision to offer benefits to same sex partners has nothing to do with the issue of the morality of homosexuality...". We respectfully disagree. It is our belief that making a special provision in order to provide privileges to an individual who practices an immoral lifestyle, and who would not otherwise qualify for such privileges, has the effect of endorsing and condoning that lifestyle, an act itself we believe to be immoral. However, it is not necessary to press our moral convictions or normative ethical standards on your firm. It is enough to base our argument on the *consequences* of such a decision as Lincoln National has made. That is, by your firms' actions, it has endorsed, and supported, very simply, a destructive lifestyle; as evidenced by the fact that its participants' life-spans are significantly (years) shorter than that of the average populations'. As a nation, we are finally coming to grips with the awful consequences of a similar behavioral idiopathy (cigarettes), but only as its terrible toll on human life has become too great to ignore. Of course, your carrier's costs for your employee health insurance will also ultimately reflect, at least on a case by case basis, the cost of the illnesses clearly and unarguably associated with such lifestyles.

Second, in directing your argument away from the morality of the issue at hand, you suggest that the "shared values" of "fairness" and "diversity" lie at the root of your decision making process in this area. In response, we would agree that "fairness" is certainly an admirable objective. However, "fairness" is relatively meaningless, aside from the ethical standards or norms over which it (fairness) is asked to preside. In your case, the norms which appear to be offered up for consideration are: 1) job competency, and 2) productive community life. In our case, the norm is more simple: adherence to God's moral law. Once again however, it is not necessary to press our belief on Lincoln National; as it can be demonstrated that the long-term *consequences* of the ethical norms you advocate will be negative; that is, you will find, ultimately, that both goals; "job competency," and

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"productive community living" will become increasingly difficult to achieve as the adverse effects of such lifestyles take their toll.

"Diversity," too, is an admirable quality. Like "fairness," however, it also depends upon ethical norms for its application and outworking. For example, *racial* diversity is biblically mandated, and we believe is to be endorsed. And, *religious* diversity stems from the right each person has to decide for him or herself what he or she should adopt as the presuppositional basis for his or her belief system and worldview. To the extent that such diversity does not interfere with the domestic tranquillity of society at large, religious diversity is to be protected (e.g., in the negative case, we would probably determine *not* to protect a religion which advocates mass suicide). On the other end of the spectrum, we do not suppose that very many of us, even in this day and age, would support a "*killer/non-killer*" diversity; which endorsed, along with citizens who do not kill, the societal acceptance and support of those who occasionally *do* kill, such as the young mass murderers who have been sweeping our nations' schools recently. However, the question of determining which type of diversity is acceptable can become more difficult when issues such as pedophilia (e.g., *The State of Washington v. Mary Kay LeTourneau*, in which Judge Lau ordered the pregnant plaintiff never again to see her 14-year old lover, despite the fact that her lover claimed not to feel exploited, and that he in fact loved Miss LeTourneau), abortion, or homosexuality are the ethical questions under examination. However, and in contrast with the general historical trends seen in society, biblical ethical norms do not change with the times, and it is for this reason we believe that a "*sexual orientation*" diversity is not now, and will never be a laudable ethical norm. As over against the moral argument, I refer you again to the "consequential" arguments outlined above for a secular perspective. As to whether society should attempt to protect individuals who adopt offensive behaviors from *feeling "persecuted,"* it seems to us that the line of protection must be drawn between what is established as acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Certainly, we would not be overly concerned if our young murderers in the example given above *felt "persecuted"* as the result of our due process treatment toward them during and after the commission of their acts. With regard to the issue of homosexuality, however, it appears we disagree as to where this line of protection should be drawn, for the reasons also cited above.

Third, as to the argument that the list of companies (IBM, Xerox, American Express, etc.) endorsing such policies as yours continues to grow: we would not necessarily presume an endless progression in the direction you suggest, as history has in fact proven otherwise. In the case of immoral sexual lifestyles, a brief study will reveal that every society in history in which such has become a significant factor has subsequently destroyed itself, and in relatively short order. Although the present rate of moral decay in our country appears to support the realization of that possibility, we of course pray that our society will regain its sense of right and wrong before that happens. As to the argument that we are currently forced to deal with such companies; we respond yes, and no. True, this letter was composed on an IBM Personal Computer using Microsoft software. And so, to the extent we are forced to deal with such companies, we will. But when we have a choice, such as in the case of Lincoln National, we hope you will respect and understand our right and interest in exercising that choice. In sum, we withdraw our business from Lincoln National for the same reason we asked your firm to cease its support of homosexual lifestyles: if there are no adverse consequences to an offensive act, the actor cannot reasonably be expected to examine his or her rationale, and to change it if it is found wanting.

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Finally, you mention Abraham Lincoln, your firm's namesake. We have taken the liberty of enclosing a sermon that our church's Senior Pastor gave almost twenty years ago regarding President Lincoln's ideology. It is a scholarly and well-researched presentation, and perhaps you will find therein a different perspective on this great man than you have been exposed to before (based on these data, we are inclined to believe the President might have been more disposed to favor the point of view we have attempted to outline above). At any rate, we hope you will find this exposition interesting, and edifying.

We regret that our financial relationship has ended. However, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, if you need more information, or if we may be of any assistance whatsoever.

Sincerely,

(Signatures attached)

DRC:

Encl: Copy of your last letter

Cc: Mr. Douglas J. Collier, Agent
LUTCF Lincoln Financial Advisors Corporation, Suite 370
800 Fairway Drive Deerfield Beach, FL 33441-1831



June 7, 1998

NameSignature

DAWN L. CROWE

Dawn L. Crowe

RUTH A. STORRINGS

Ruth A. Storings

CALVIN P. LONGACRE

Calvin P. Longacre

ROSITA CLASS

Rosita Class

SUSAN D. JOHNSON-MILLER

Susan D. Johnson-Miller

JOHN L. WILSON

John L. Wilson

KATHY McARTHUR

Kathy McArthur

LINDA STRANSKY

Linda Stransky

Rev. SAM LAMERSON

Sam Lamerson

WAS
ABRAHAM
LINCOLN A
CHRISTIAN?





D. James Kennedy, Ph.D.

From the pulpit of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Dr. D. James Kennedy proclaims the Word of God through television and radio to 25,000 cities and towns, and foreign countries. From a small gathering of seventeen, the church has grown under his ministry to a membership of almost 8,000, with a peak attendance of over 12,000.

Dr. Kennedy is the President and Founder of Evangelism Explosion International which is now training laymen in evangelism in 132 countries throughout the world. He has also founded a school, Westminster Academy, and a Christian radio station, WAFG, which broadcasts 24 hours a day. He is Founder and Chancellor of Knox Theological Seminary.

WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN A CHRISTIAN?

by

D. James Kennedy

A.B., M.Div., M.Th., D.D., D.Sac.Lit., Ph.D., Litt.D.,
D.Sac.Theol., D.Humane Let.

**TEXT: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
—Romans 5:1**

The most perfect speech ever uttered by mortal man was delivered on the battlefield of Gettysburg. It has been learned by unnumbered millions of children in school. It is actually an extended personification, where America is personified as a man who is conceived, born, dedicated, lives his life, engages in dangerous and perhaps mortal struggles, is born anew, and lives thereafter gloriously.

Abraham Lincoln is immortal in the minds and memories of his countrymen, for on the battlefield at Gettysburg, this is what he said:

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long

endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The world noted, far more than he ever thought, the words that were spoken there—though Lincoln's invitation to speak was an afterthought. The orator of the day, of course, was Edward Everett—perhaps the greatest in the land, who spoke for two hours. What did he say? No one knows. Lincoln spoke for two minutes—and no one has forgotten! Remarkable, indeed.

But the question I would ask of you today is: Is Lincoln immortal in any other way than merely in

the memory of his countrymen? That, indeed, is a great honor, but it is little felt by those that are dead. Is he immortal in the far greater sense, next to which immortality and the memory of his people is but a pale substitute? Is he immortal in the real sense of everlasting life which Jesus Christ and Christ only can give to a man, or to put it another way: Was Abraham Lincoln a Christian?

Now I, in preaching this message, am not endeavoring to merely exhume the bones of Lincoln for some kind of belated autopsy. But rather, this is another way of proclaiming anew that Gospel message with which he struggled all of his life in the hope that as we emphasize and sympathize with his struggles with the great verities of life and death and eternity, that some of you will ask yourselves the deeper and more relevant question: Am I a Christian? Are you?

Consider well the sixteenth President of the United States. Like the nation he described in its conception, Lincoln was conceived in the midst of great religious fervor. There was a revival going on in Kentucky in 1809 of the type associated with the evangelist Peter Cartwright. (By the way, when Lincoln was grown, he entered into a political contest with Cartwright in running for the same office.)

But in the midst of a prayer meeting, young Tom Lincoln leaped to his feet in the midst of this religious fervor and began to dance around and sing. A moment or two later, a young lady by the name of Nancy, did the same thing. They were soon introduced, engaged, and shortly thereafter married. In the midst of that religious fervor, Abraham Lincoln was born to Tom Lincoln and Nancy

Hanks Lincoln. Certainly a spiritually, encouraging beginning.

His mother was a godly woman who sat Lincoln upon her knees day after day after day and read to him the Scriptures and encouraged him to remember it. Particularly, she encouraged him to learn the Ten Commandments. (Every parent should certainly have their children memorize the Ten Commandments.) They had a profound effect upon Lincoln's life. He said that whenever he was tempted to do something wrong, he could still hear the clear tones of his mother's voice saying, **"I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before me . . . Thou shalt not steal . . . Thou shalt not kill . . . Thou shalt not bear false witness . . ."**

Abraham Lincoln became known, believe it or not, as the most honest lawyer east of China. As a young prairie lawyer in Illinois, when his opponents forgot or did not know some points in arguments, he would remind them. Once, when he was a shop-keeper, he walked for miles to return an overpayment of only a few cents by one of the customers.

Lincoln also had a great regard for the Sabbath, as well. At one time during the war, when he was President, he went to Falmouth and there he visited with the general, who told him he was going to begin on Sunday the March to Richmond. Richmond was the heart of the Confederacy, its capital, and this well could mean the end of the war, for which Lincoln had so fervently prayed for so long. But the general brought it up because he knew of the opposition the President had toward

beginning military initiatives on the Sabbath day. The President was silent for a long while. Then he said, "General take a good rest and begin on Monday morning." Lincoln was never a member of any church. Would that the members of *this* church had as high a regard for the Sabbath as Lincoln did.

I would like to express my appreciation to many writers who have contributed to this message. I have read thousands of stories about Lincoln, perused his entire total works, and numbers of biographies. I particularly appreciate William J. Johnson's excellent biography of Lincoln. My appreciation to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington for sending me copies of historical documents and affidavits from their archives, and to the late F. W. Boreham, the great Australian preacher, whose Outline I would like to borrow for this message, and also, many others who have brought to my attention new information.

THE AGE OF IRON

Boreham says there were three mountains Lincoln climbed where his life was changed. The first stage he described as the Age of Iron, where he "climbed Mount Sinai with Moses" in his effort to keep the commandments of God. He had learned the Ten Commandments on his mother's knee. Those commandments influenced his life in such an incredible way that he gave himself to studying them. When Lincoln was only nine, his mother sickened, and before she died she called him to her side and said to him, "I am going away from you now Abraham and shall not return. I know that you will be a good boy and that you will be kind to your father. I want you to live as I have taught you—to love your



Heavenly Father,” and then her last words, “and keep His commandments.”

Yes, Lincoln strove mightily to keep those commandments. But the question is: Was he a Christian? Listen to Lincoln’s own words: “I am not a Christian. God knows I would be one.” He said that he did not read the Scriptures like those clergymen in Springfield who opposed his election because of his skepticism.

And they were right. When Lincoln came to Springfield, he fell in with some agnostic and skeptical friends who gave him, among other things, *Volney’s Ruins*, a great volume of unbelief which attacked viciously and articulately the Scriptures. By the way, *Volney’s Ruins* has been repudiated on every page, but Lincoln did not know that then. This had a tremendously chilling effect upon his boyhood faith, and he became quite skeptical. “I am not a Christian,” he said in the Age of Iron.

THE AGE OF CLAY

The second mountain Lincoln climbed was described by Boreham as the Age of Clay, when he climbed Mount Carmel with Elijah, where he was clay in the hands of the Almighty Potter. What was Lincoln like? When he was a young man, he looked in a mirror one day and said to himself, “It’s a fact, Abe! You are the ugliest man in the world. If ever I see a man uglier than you, I’m going to shoot him on the spot!” It would no doubt, he thought, be an act of mercy.

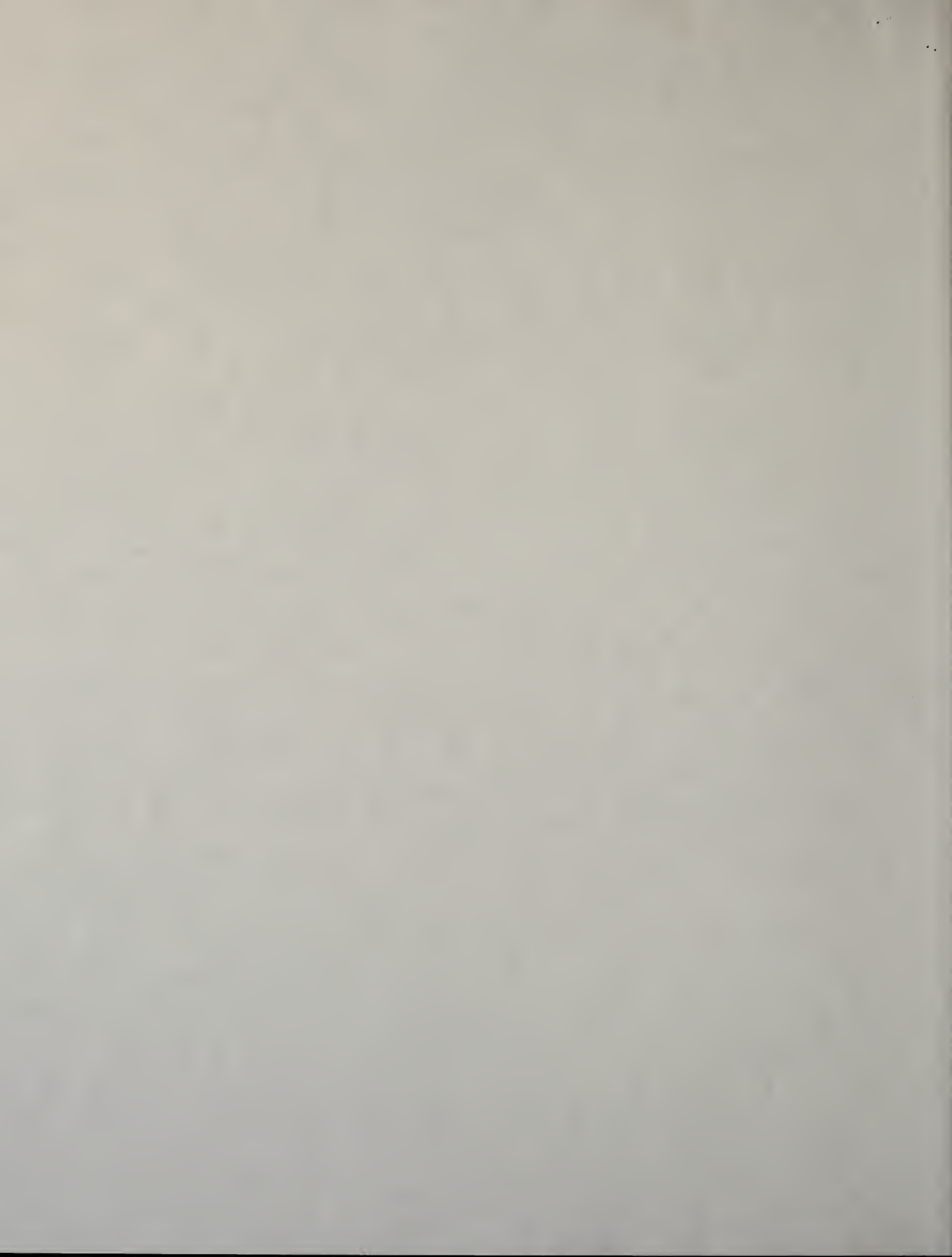
What was his personality like as a young man? We’ve seen what he thought of himself, and of

course, we can’t help but conjure up some pictures of this rather unique looking gentleman. He was six foot four in a world of midgets, when everybody else was far shorter than they are today. He towered over everyone head and shoulders. Of course, there were those horribly long arms, the bane of his tailors, with these gigantic hands; that uncontrollable lock of hair on his forehead; deep dark eyes; sallow skin. Indeed, he could not see what any young lady could see in him. And yet, when you look at him sitting there in that great chair at the Lincoln Memorial, you can’t help but feel that somehow there is a certain grandeur about this man who thought he was so ugly.

What was his personality like? One day a young lady that he had attempted to date said, “Abe Lincoln, you are illiterate, self-opinionated, overbearing and abominably ill-mannered.” (She liked to beat around the bush.) What did Lincoln do? What, gentleman, would you do in a situation like that? He determined to completely change himself, and he turned to the Scriptures. He still had his mother’s Bible, and he began to read in the Sermon on the Mount and other passages in the Bible about what God intended a man to be like.

Was he illiterate? He became the most literate President we have ever known. As I said, his Gettysburg Address is considered to be the most perfect speech ever uttered by mortal man, but I disagree. I think his Second Inaugural Address is far superior even to that.

Was he proud and overbearing? He became the humblest President we have ever had. Someone once asked me what I thought was his most



outstanding quality. I said it was his ability to forgive anyone anything because he was himself so humble.

Lincoln's humility is further seen when, immediately after the war, he went to Richmond to the home of the President of the Confederacy who was, as you might imagine, "not home." His wife came to the door carrying a little baby in her arms—the baby of Jefferson Davis. The baby reached out to the President. Of course, Mrs. Davis was astounded to see Lincoln standing in her doorway. He took the baby into his arms and was given a big wet smack on the face. He handed the baby back to Mrs. Jefferson Davis and said, "Tell your husband that for the sake of that kiss, I forgive him [everything]." He was an incredibly humble man.

One time during the war Lincoln went to the home of General McClellan. Now McClellan had a hearty dislike for Lincoln, but he was a good general. Lincoln wanted him to become the general of the Army of the Potomac, because the war was not going well at all. When he arrived at his home that evening with an aide, the general was not home. The butler ushered them into the library, and they waited. They waited for over an hour. Finally the general came home, and the butler told him that the President of the United States was waiting to see him. But McClellan went upstairs. Ten, twenty, thirty minutes passed. Finally, the butler went upstairs and again said, "Sir, the President is still waiting for you." In a few minutes he came back down and told the President, "The general has gone to bed."

If you were President of the United States, what would you do? Lincoln went back the next night. His aide said, "Sir, how can you put up with that ill-mannered boor?"

Lincoln replied: "Why, I would be willing to hold McClellan's horse, if only he will give victory to our army." He, indeed, was putty in the hands of the Almighty, and he had done this through studying the Scriptures.

Theodore Roosevelt said that Lincoln mastered only one book and that was the Bible. He had committed thousands of verses to memory—many whole chapters—and he was trying to change his life to be what God would want him to be.

He was a man whose life was filled with tragedy. His beloved mother died when he was but nine. Then his sister died. The woman he loved, Ann Rutledge, could never be his.

After his father remarried, every Sunday his stepmother took Abe and his sister to the Pigeon Creek Hardshell Baptist Church. Here they listened to the fiery sermons about predestination, justification, foreordination, sanctification, and the new birth. He and Sarah sat in the front row and listened to it all—but he never understood it.

He was married to a woman who certainly challenged his humility, Mary Todd. Lincoln is loved by people all over the world as the most beloved President the United States has ever had. But Mary Todd never saw anything good in him at all. As far as she was concerned he had terrible faults. He walked flatfooted, she said, with his toes turned down like an Indian. Furthermore, he slouched when he walked. He was head and shoulders taller than everybody else. Maybe he wanted to join the crowd. But Mary never saw anything good in this man. Poor Mary, or should I say, poor Abraham, but humbly he endured it all to the end.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Then the great tragedy of his life occurred when his little son, Willie, the apple of his eye, died. He was crushed. There is no doubt that he believed at this time strongly in the providence of God, though he could not understand and had rejected much else in the Bible—especially concerning the doctrines of salvation and redemption, which he could never understand due to the way it was presented to him. But he believed in God's providence, and he was to climb now, at last, the third mountain, Mount Calvary, with Saint John. This was what Boreham describes as the Golden Age. There he was to find something he had never seen before.

Was he a Christian at this time? Ward Lamon, who had been his law partner, who had been his private secretary when he was President, who had been his bodyguard for years, and who knew him intimately, said of Lincoln, "... the melancholy that dripped from him as he walked was due to his want of religious faith."

But then little Willie died, the apple of his eye, his beloved son, his little boy. Lincoln was absolutely crushed. He was so overwhelmed with grief that he set aside every Thursday to mourn his death. After some period of time, when he would see no one on that day, but wept and mourned and lamented the death of his son Willie, Dr. Francis Vinton, rector of Trinity Church, came down to Washington from New York. He was a friend of the family, and was allowed in to see the President. Not wanting to beat around the bush, he told him it was not right to mourn thus over his son. He said, "Your son is alive in paradise with Christ, and you must not continue..."

Lincoln sat there as though he were in a stupor, and then his mind caught on to the words that Dr. Vinton had said, and he exclaimed, "Alive! Alive! Surely, sir, you mock me."

"No, Mr. President, it is a great doctrine of the church. Jesus himself said that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Lincoln leaped to his feet and threw his arms around this pastor. He wept openly and sobbed, saying, "Alive! Alive! My boy is alive!"

From that day there began a change in Lincoln that even his wife Mary noticed. His religious views began to dramatically change. There is a remarkable letter that comes to us from an Illinois clergyman who talked to Lincoln after this time. He said this to Mr. Lincoln (Again, I commend him for his boldness): "Mr. President, do you love Jesus?"

After a long pause, Mr. Lincoln solemnly replied:

When I left Springfield I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, I *do* love Jesus.

By the way, when I preached this sermon before, someone challenged that statement. Well, I would suggest they do what I do. Go to Washington. Go to Ford's Theater. Go across the street to the Lincoln Museum; ask for *The Lincoln Memorial: Album-Immortelles* in the O.H. Oldroyd Collection. The book was published in 1883, and

the quote is found on page 366. But if you would rather not do all of that, then simply come to my study, and I will show you a photocopied page from that book on the stationery of the U.S. Federal Government Agency charged with caring for that museum. "Yes, I do love Jesus," Lincoln said.

Mr. Noah Brooks, sometime after that, longtime friend and newspaper correspondent, said, "I have had many conversations with Mr. Lincoln, which were more or less of a religious character, and while I never tried to draw anything like a statement of his views from him, yet he freely expressed himself to me as having a hope of blessed immortality through Jesus Christ . . ." Lincoln said that he had found the peace that had eluded him all of his life. "Therefore, being justified by faith . . ." he now had peace with God.

When a lady connected with the work of the Christian Commission later came to see him, he said: "I had lived until my boy Willie died without realizing fully these things [about the Gospel] . . . It showed me my weakness as I had never felt it before, and if I can take what you have stated [as to what a Christian is] as a *test*, I think I can safely say that I know something of that *change* of which you speak; [which is called the *new birth*, to which Lincoln alluded in that very speech: ". . . that this country might have a *new birth* of freedom."], and I will further add, that it has been my intention for some time, at a suitable opportunity, to make a public religious profession."

Dr. Gurley was pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, which Lincoln attended regularly—not only on Sunday morning but also on Wednesday night. One Wednes-

day night he sat in a little ante room right off the chancel with the door halfway open so that he would not disturb the worship of others, but that he might partake.

Dr. Gurley said that Lincoln had wanted to make a public profession of his faith on Easter Sunday morning. But then came Ford's Theater. He had just been elected for the second time six weeks before that. His spiritual understanding had matured greatly in the year and a half since Gettysburg. Every message was peppered with Scripture and spiritual insights.

"His Second Inaugural Address is not only the most spiritual speech ever given by any statesman in the world," said one of England's leaders, "in my opinion, it is a far better sermon than most any I have ever heard preached in a pulpit." And I would include, most certainly, my own.

These words from his Second Inaugural Address are carved into the wall of the Lincoln Memorial:

The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which

the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God give us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

Lincoln had been to Calvary. His heart and mind were changed. The last speech he gave three days before his death was one in which he said that he was submitting a proclamation for a national day of thanksgiving to God. He said, also, that now that the abomination of slavery was removed, the next point on the agenda would be to get rid of the curse of alcohol which had so plagued the land. In his last meeting with his Cabinet on that Thursday morning in opposition to strongly held opinions by some of his Cabinet members, he said: "There will be no recriminations against the South." If he had lived, the history of postwar South would have been far different, indeed.

His last act was to issue an edict that hence-

forth, on every coin would be printed the words: "In God We Trust." Lincoln had been to Calvary.

That night he was invited to Ford's Theater to see a play he wasn't really interested in. He had received that very day the news that the war was over. He sat in his chair in the presidential box—a box that was supposed to be guarded by a soldier.

He had talked about the curse of liquor that plagued the land. That afternoon a man from the South crossed the street and went into a tavern and had a number of drinks. His name was John Wilkes Booth. That evening a soldier from the North left his post, crossed the same street and entered the same tavern to have a drink—while the aforementioned actor quietly opened the unguarded door to the President's box and went in.

Lincoln was sitting up talking to his wife, not paying any attention to the play. He said, "Mary, do you know what I would like to do now? Now that the war is over, we could go to the Near East. [Booth stepped up behind the President] We could go to Bethlehem where He was born. We could visit Bethany where those hallowed steps were so often heard." [Booth pointed his gun at the back of Lincoln's head.] Lincoln continued, "And we could go up to Jeru.." BANG! . . . the maddest pistol shot in history rang forth.

Lincoln was carried across the street to a boarding house (which is now a museum) and laid diagonally across the bed that was too short for his huge frame. On the next day—Good Friday—he died. He was going to make his public profession on Easter Sunday.

Secretary of War Stanton, when he looked down on that bed at his cold form, said, "Here lies the most perfect ruler of men that the world has ever known." Lincoln had climbed Mount Calvary, and he had come to know the Savior.

Walt Whitman concludes his great poem, "My Captain, My Captain," where he pictures Lincoln as the captain of the Ship of State which has come through a terrible storm and now lies upon the deck:

My captain does not answer,
his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm,
he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchored safe and sound,
its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip, the victor ship,
comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

But we cannot leave him lying there upon the deck of the Ship of State, for I would like to add one of my own: a fourth mountain that Lincoln climbed. Beyond Mount Calvary, the fourth was Mount Zion, where he went up to, not the Jerusalem in the Near East, but to the Jerusalem on high—to the heavenly Jerusalem, taken there by Christ to whom he had consecrated his heart, and in whom he now trusted for his salvation. He had abandoned his trust in the commandments and in his own strivings, and now he trusted in Christ. Yes, dear friend, at long length, Abraham Lincoln was a Christian. Are you?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pray that if there are any here who are still trusting in their ability to gain access into Thy heaven by keeping the commandments that they will see the utter folly of that. If there are any here who still suppose that by attempting to improve themselves they may make themselves acceptable to Thee who is of purer eyes than even to look upon iniquity, cause them to turn from trusting in themselves and to trust in Jesus Christ, who alone is their hope of eternal life—that they, too, may go up to Jerusalem on high by consecrating their hearts and trusting their lives to Christ. In whose name we pray. Amen.



Photo by John W. Wilson

A variety of works on the Christian faith have been written by Dr. Kennedy, including the landmark textbook, *Evangelism Explosion*, being used in many languages to train laymen in the art of witnessing.

His book, *Why I Believe*, is a scholarly, yet practical defense of twelve essential truths of Christianity. *Truths that Transform* is a respected source as an examination of Christian doctrines and their importance to daily life. Other writings by Dr. Kennedy include: *The God of Great Surprises*, *Knowing the Whole Truth*, *Learning to Live with the People You Love*, *Your Prodigal Child*, *Spiritual Renewal*, *Beginning Again*, *Chain Reaction*, *This Is the Life*, and *Turn It to Gold*.

Dr. Kennedy holds the following degrees: A.B., University of Tampa; M.Div., *cum laude*, Columbia Theological Seminary; M.Th., *summa cum laude*, Chicago Graduate School of Theology; D.D., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; D.Sac.Lit., Christian Bible College; Ph.D., New York University; Litt.D., California Graduate School of Theology; D.Sac.Theol., Southwest Baptist University; D.Humane Let., Campbell University.

Dr. Kennedy is recognized as one of the leading Christian statesmen of our time. His rational, straightforward, and fearless use of the Word of God has brought him into national prominence.

Dr. Kennedy's vision is a ministry which leads an individual to a life with Christ and provides instruction in the application of Scripture to every aspect of the life of the individual, the Church, the school, and the government.

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The preacher's tale

Part 3

"Such a mourning
as this was
never known:"

Reverend Francis Springer's
lost discourse on the death
of Abraham Lincoln

"The Lincoln Assassination," an original
lithograph published in Harper's Weekly on
April 29, 1865.



BY REVEREND FRANCIS SPRINGER

A DISCOURSE
Delivered at Fort Smith, Ark., by
Rev. Francis Springer, Post Chaplain, on
Wednesday, April 19th, 1865, at the
Funeral Ceremonies in Memory of
Abraham Lincoln, late President of the
United States.

On April 15, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln died from an assassin's bullet in Washington, D.C., just six days after the end of the Civil War. Within hours, the tragic news reached Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Reverend Francis Springer, Lincoln's friend and one-time neighbor, who was serving as Post Chaplain at the remote outpost.

The following Wednesday, April 19, 1865, Chaplain Springer delivered a passionate eulogy in memory of the late President, which was

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God,
and saying:

Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

violently torn from life by the foulest of intrigues—the intrigue of assassination. Not a dotard of incompetency, but a man of the loftiest genius; not a reckless adventurer, inflamed with a desire for notoriety; but a citizen of probity, prudence and honor;—a man of exalted moral character; of deep religious feeling, and of proverbial honesty;—a man in all respects eminently worthy to be the representative and chief magistrate of

vengeance of intestine slaughter. The plow and the hoe, the anvil and the loom, the chisel and the plane began to move again, as if peaceful industry and the reunion of broken families, would once more push aside the tearful array of sabres, muskets, and artillery. But, swift and sudden, as the dash of the hawk on his prey was the distressing change! A black cloud now frowns where a clear sky then smiled. How true it is, that

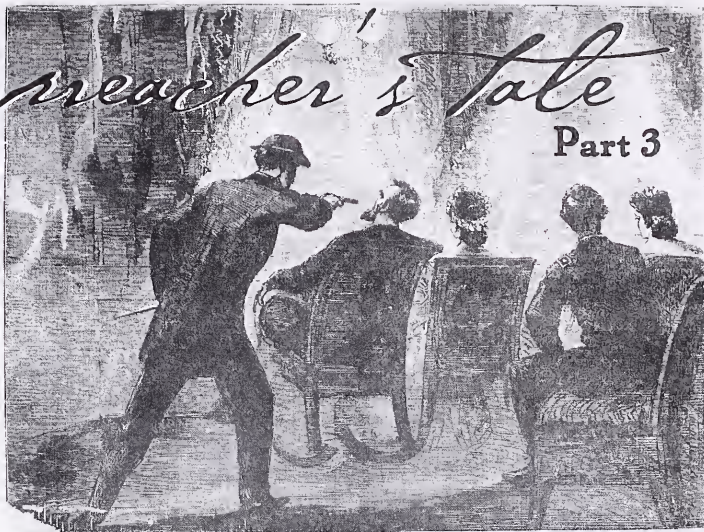
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Acts 7: 58-60.

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Such a mourning as this was never known. The like of it is not in history. Besotted and foolish occupants of imperial thrones have fallen under the stroke of assassination; but never a sober, humane and wise President of a nation of voters. Not the will of a single ruler—not the will of a party,—but the will of a numerous, wealthy, powerful and intelligent nation of free people, has been thwarted, and outraged by the poniard and pistol of secret and stealthy assault. Not a tyrant, but a philanthropist and patriot, freely elected by his countrymen, has been foully murdered. Not a usurper but a lawful and constitutional President chosen from among the millions by the millions, has fallen into the crafty snare of partisan hatred and cowardice. Not one thrust upon, but one selected by the people free from the tricks and intrigues of faction has been

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Thousands of noble men, as brave and loyal as MR. LINCOLN, have fallen in this war, but he only of all the numerous hosts of the fallen ones was the representative of the whole nation; and because he was such, and such so well, the nation mourns.

Only a few days ago, shouts of rejoicing by human voices and the roar of a thousand cannon blazed over all the land. It was because the angel of peace had come in sight. We beheld the outline of her heavenly form. It seemed as if God himself was once more drawing near to relieve us from the afflicting

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The jublations of exultant hope have all at once given place to the dismal bodings of despair. Where gladness thrilled, terror now reigns. In hearts once joyous with the brightening beams of peace, there is now unutterable grief. Eyes but lately aglow with the dawn of a lovely future are dimmed with tears. Silent but absorbing sorrow oppresses every soul.

Finds in human shape with no soul but that of Satan, with no affections but those of malice, with no imagination but that of frenzy, with no will but the purpose of murder, and no memory but to treasure up materials for wrath—such fiends, with deadly weapons in hand, strike the President and Secretary of State—two of the worthiest among men.

The Secretary of State was an invalid confined to his bed, an object of compassion rather than of dread. But the hour of his weakness was deemed the fiend's opportunity, as the hour of the Savior's hunger was the Tempter's best chance to say, "Command the stone to be made

bread." With polished and keen-edged blade concealed, a pretense of bringing medicine is made. By this trick of perfidy the villain gains admittance within the sanctities of the sick man's chamber; and instantly thrusts the sharp steel at the heart and throat of the unsuspecting patient. The nurse is alarmed, and an attendant son of the suffering springs to the rescue of his father; but he too, cut and mangled, falls under the assassin's stroke.

Almost at the same moment, a similar deed of devilish ferocity is perpetrated in another part of the city. There is a crowded theater. The President, seeking relaxation from the late heavy cares upon him, is a spectator. He occupies his own private apartment, and is accompanied by his wife and a few friends. Harmless, innocent, and unsuspecting of evil, he quietly enjoys the scene before him, not for an instant fancying that an incarnate demon stood behind him, taking deliberate aim to shoot him dead. In a second more, the perpetrator brandishes a blazing knife and thrusts forth to hide amidst the outer darkness. The President became immediately insensible, and expired in ten hours, a martyr to equal rights and universal liberty.

In the foul transactions of that hour, we behold the culminating deed of the secessionist spirit. The assassination of President Lincoln was beyond a doubt, a hireling's work. The murderer was not alone. His accomplices and abettors were legion. The same thing had been schemed in February '61, when Mr. Lincoln was on his way to Washington. Secession newspapers at that early day spoke boldly of the virtue there would be in the sudden extinction of Mr. Lincoln's life. And when the nefarious plot proved a failure, they sneeringly said, the prudent caution of their intended victim was cowardice and his friends were cowards. Not many months ago, a paragraph appeared in several rebel papers, setting forth a proposition to restore peace to the country and prestige to the South for the sum of five millions of dollars. The means proposed was the assassination of the President and Secretary Seward. Not once, but many times have the utterances of rebel mouths and rebel presses called for the death of the President.

Nor when we consider all the circumstances, is this morbid taste for blood surprising. It is, and has been for many years, the chief lesson of secession education, to conquer or kill, to reign or to ruin. To submit peacefully to the will of the majority constitutionally expressed, was never the intention of the insurgents. Neither was it ever their intention to allow freedom of opinion and universal suffrage among the poor whites of the South. Much less was it ever their intention that the laboring classes, whether white, black or quadroon, should ever be free men. In short, the first maxim of political orthodoxy with all that class of men is that Capital only should be free and Labor its servant.

Hence, it came to pass as a logical consequence of these views, that when argument failed them, brute force was deemed necessary and lawful. The frequent occasions for resort to brute force,

as against superior intelligence, gave rise to the frequent practice of it. Then, this forcible method of argumentation was often applied to school teachers and ministers of the Gospel, even on the base suspicion that these apostles of Christian culture were or might become incendiaries to the South. Teachers and preachers were sometimes silenced, banished or hung, as was Rev. Wm. Bewly in Texas, a short time before the war.

Hence also, it came to pass that this same party was always headed in Congress of the United States by senators and representatives armed with bowie knives, loaded canes, stiletos, and revolvers. They never failed in the argument but they sought to vindicate their title to superiority by a fisticuff, or

striking with the cane, or a challenge to the duel. Their conception of a lofty manhood was not mild, (redeeming), reasoning and truth-loving; but it was ferocious, violent, vindictive and self-willed. When the hour of their abounding prosperity came, they had not the christianized philosophy to bear it and use it with prudence for the common good of mankind. Instead of making them wiser and better, prosperity only intoxicated them with the delirium of wild ambition; and when they could not always have their own way, they were easily maddened into rage.

The outer life naturally springing from such principles and such passionate indulgences, has often been exhibited in the course of the present war. The hasty

firing on the Star of the West and on Fort Sumpter (sic), are illustrations; so also is their constant use of falsehood to the people of the South respecting the people of the North; and towering higher than all in fiendish atrocity is the rebel practice of stripping, mistreating and starving Federal soldiers when taken as prisoners of war. And in the same line of illustrations of the rebel inner and outer life is the use of guerrillas and bushwhackers to aid the so-called "Southern independence." Their latest case of bushwhacking was enacted upon the President, Mr. Seward and his household.

My friends, I have endeavored briefly, dispassionately and truthfully to connect the present national bereave-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►

When Lexie broke her arm playing, the team at the Bone & Joint Institute immediately went to work taking great care of her.

Six year old Lexie is a bundle of energy, anticipation and action. So when she broke her arm playing with her friends, she was more upset about leaving them than her painful injury. Maybe because her mother was confident about the exceptional, concerned care Lexie would receive at the

"I loved my Doctor. He was Great."
—Lexie

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Lexie's doctor reassured both Lexie and her mother, Laura, that the injury would heal quickly.

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"Everyone took the time to make us feel comfortable and welcome."
—Laura

and courage. She knew she'd soon be back to the gymnastics, pagenets and playing she loved.

"I would recommend St. John's to every mom. You can tell they love kids."
—Laura

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7:30 PM—Studio Theatre

Sunday, April 25
2:00 PM—Studio Theatre

• 1999 ALCHEMIST REVIEW

Premiere of the 1999 literary magazine
With readings by its UIS authors
Thursday, April 22
8:00 PM—Visual Arts Gallery
(Health & Sci. Bldg.)
Reception following

• Dr. Dennis Baran

• Author of *Guide to Home
Language Repair* and other books
addressing the history and use of the
English language
• Professor of English & Linguistics
and English Dept. Head at the
University of Illinois at Urbana-
Champaign

Friday, April 23
2:30 PM Workshop—Public Affairs
Rm. Conference Rm. G

"Literacy and Technology"
7:30 PM Keynote Address—
Brokens Auditorium

"From Pencils to Pixels: Literacy
and the New Technologies of Writing"

• Harpist Linda Elliott & All Things Medieval

10th-century playwright Hrotsvit of
Candelerheim's *Dukulus* Performed by
UIS medieval drama group
Pre-show music by Linda Elliott
Saturday, April 24
7:00 PM—Brokens Auditorium

• Civil War Band & Verbal Arts Players

Graduate student Sam B. Davis's play
Massacre
Performed by UIS Verbal Arts Players
Pre-show music by a Civil War Band
Saturday, April 24
8:30 PM—Brokens Auditorium

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The preacher's tale Part 3

ment with its logical antecedents. In this I have succeeded truthfully, it follows of necessity that the murder of our nation's greatest chieftain attaches all the odium of the base deed to the rebel cause. It was not an affair of individual or private animosity. It was not done on private or individual responsibility. The awful deed involves the character and responsibility of the whole rebel fraternity and is a blasting, withering and destroying curse to their cause. It cannot fail to bring down upon them the scorn of all the civilized [powers] of the globe.

They will, of course, cunningly strive to escape the odium by advancing various opinions and theories in solution of the shameful transaction. They may aver that a mere personal affront incited the perpetration; that the Federal chiefs have quarreled among themselves, and that a faction in the Federal Cabinet procured the assassination; that Vice President Johnson was criminally eager to supplant Mr. Lincoln; and other subterfuges equally false.

Fellow citizens and soldiers, let me speak freely, most earnestly warn you not to entertain any theories or explanations tending to relieve the rebels of the foul stigma. To the rebellion belongs the deed. If you ever were in sympathy with the rebels before, and do not withdraw now, you make yourself a willing partner with the murderers. As well could an angel of light be in sympathy with demons of the nether pit, as a true loyalist can now be in sympathy with the party who are plotting for the rebel confederacy. That confederacy is scabbed leprous and putrid with the crimes of theft, falsehood and assassination. No right-minded person, surely, can now willingly touch the loathsome carcass. The deadly assault upon the President and Secretary of State means the total overthrow of the Government of the United States. It could signify nothing less. None but the most violent enemies of their country and enemies of mankind could be guilty of a deed so dreadful. I cannot think it possible for any one who

hears me today, to entertain for an instant a feeling of fellowship for the perpetrators or abettors of the nefarious deed, or with the cause to which the odium of the deed belongs.

But my friends, let us turn away from the sickening sight, and contemplate for a moment the noble deed.

Abraham Lincoln perished a martyr to the cause of equal rights and universal freedom. He perished ignominiously and unjustly; but so did Stephen, the first martyr in the cause of Christ.

The killing of Stephen was a crime of his nation. It was done with the sanction of the highest authority. Because it was a crime, the party perpetrating it was punished. That party was the Jewish State; and on that State vengeance of insulted justice poured a most terrible retribution—Jerusalem was utterly destroyed; human beings by hundreds of thousands perished; the Hebrew nationality was blotted out; and the remnant of the people scattered to become a byword and a hissing among all the tribes of mankind. In the case of MR. LINCOLN, it was not the nation, but only a guilty, bloody and turbulent faction that committed the crime. A doom of wretchedness is in store for the guilty faction. The history of crimes shows clearly that guilt brings punishment with as much certainty as that lightning is a consuming fire. Neither an individual, a faction, or a nation can avert the dreadful doom of evildoers. The Almighty himself cannot stay the vengeance which wickedness provokes, without reversing the order of His own works and nullifying the laws of His own empire.

Stephen perished in the exercise of the forgiving spirit exemplified by the Savior on the cross. So too, closed the mortal life of our noble President. He indulged no malice to a living soul, though hosts of infuriate enemies were constantly in ambush for his blood. He deplored the enmity and hatred of his and his country's foes, but personal malice never darkened his clear and cheerful soul.

The blood of the ancient martyrs was the fertilizer of the church. Thus, likewise, will the death of MR. LINCOLN impart new vigor to the principles and policy of government which he so ably represented. The words of that man will be treasured words in the hearts of millions as long as human governments

endure. At the present moment, his untimely death by means so foul, pushes the Nation to the verge of anarchy and ruin; but this can be only temporary. The principles embodied in the National Government are indestructible, and they are more dear to the hearts of loyal citizens because of the rich treasure expended for them.

Our martyred chieftain died. I doubt not, (for I knew him well by a personal acquaintance of more than 25 years), in the possession of a deep, earnest and sustaining religious life. He was a firm believer in the teachings of the Savior. He never indulged in profane swearing; never in the use of intoxicating liquors; was one of the most obliging and kind-hearted of neighbors; was never severely exacting but was always liberal to the needy, generous to his friends, magnanimous to his rivals, and forgiving to his enemies. He was a regular attendant at church, and a cheerful contributor to any Christian enterprise that promised amelioration to mankind. His lively conviction of a present, personal God, guiding the march of the human race to a higher and nobler destiny, was probably the most potent energy of Mr. Lincoln's spiritual nature. To the inquiry once addressed to him, whether he loved the Savior, his answer was: "I do love the Savior."

To American youth, the example of our departed President may safely be commended. Mr. Lincoln was not "descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors," but he ascended from the low condition of a frontier log cabin boy to preeminent honor among the wise and good. From poor and obscure but virtuous parentage have arisen our Benjamin Franklin, our Andrew Jackson, our Henry Clay, and last, but not least, our noble Abraham Lincoln.

Youth of my country, be studious, [earnest], prayerful, and persistent in the pursuit and attainment of a cultivated humanity. Let not your humble condition depress you, but only quicken your energy to rise above it, assured that,

When the battle is fought, and the victory won,

Life's trials are ended, and life's duties are done;

That Jesus your Savior will welcome you home

To mansions on high where Abraham's gone! ■

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May 5, 2005

Stuck in Lincoln's Land

By DAVID BROOKS

On Sept. 22, 1862, Abraham Lincoln gathered his cabinet to tell them he was going to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. He said he had made a solemn vow to the Almighty that if God gave him victory at Antietam, Lincoln would issue the decree.

Lincoln's colleagues were stunned. They were not used to his basing policy on promises made to the Lord. They asked him to repeat what he'd just said. Lincoln conceded that "this might seem strange," but "God had decided the question in favor of the slaves."

I like to think about this episode when I hear militant secularists argue that faith should be kept out of politics. Like Martin Luther King Jr. a century later, Lincoln seemed to understand that epochal decisions are rarely made in a secular frame of mind. When great leaders make daring leaps, they often feel themselves surrendering to Divine Providence, and their strength flows from their faith that they are acting in accordance with transcendent moral truth.

And I also think back on Lincoln at moments like these, when other boundaries between church and state are a matter of hot dispute. Lincoln is apt, because this emancipation moment was actually exceptional. Lincoln was neither a scoffer nor a guy who could talk directly to God. Instead, he wrestled with faith, longing to be more religious, but never getting there.

Today, a lot of us are stuck in Lincoln's land. We reject the bland relativism of the militant secularists. We reject the smug ignorance of, say, a Robert Kuttner, who recently argued that the culture war is a contest between enlightened reason and dogmatic absolutism. But neither can we share the conviction of the orthodox believers, like the new pope, who find maximum freedom in obedience to eternal truth. We're a little nervous about the perfectionism that often infects evangelical politics, the rush to crash through procedural checks and balances in order to reach the point of maximum moral correctness.

Those of us stuck here in this wrestling-with-faith world find Lincoln to be our guide and navigator. Lincoln had enough firm conviction to lead a great moral crusade, but his zeal was tempered by doubt, and his governing style was dispassionate.

The key to Lincoln's approach is that he was mesmerized by religion, but could never shake his skepticism. Politically, he knew that the country needed the evangelicals' moral rigor to counteract the forces of selfishness and subjectivism, but he could never actually be an evangelical himself.



So, like many other Whigs, he was with the evangelicals, but not of them. This Whig-evangelical alliance was responsible for a great wave of internal improvements that transformed the country. Some of the improvements were material: the canals, the railroads. Some were spiritual: the Sunday school movement, the temperance movement. Some, like abolitionism, were both.

But as Daniel Walker Howe has noted, these efforts were all seen as part of the same reform agenda: to create a country of laboring, self-disciplined, upwardly striving (spiritually and materially) individuals.

Lincoln believed in this cause as fervently as anybody, but he was always trying to slow down his evangelical allies. As the great historian Allen C. Guelzo argues, Lincoln favored the classical virtue of prudence, which aims at incremental progress and, to borrow a phrase from Lincoln, at making sure that politics doesn't degenerate "into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle."

Lincoln came to believe in a God who was active in human affairs but who concealed himself. The only truths he could rely upon were those contained in the Declaration of Independence: that human beings are endowed with unalienable rights. We Americans can be ardent in championing that creed, but beyond that, it's best to be humble and cautious.

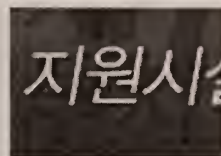
One lesson we can learn from Lincoln is that there is no one vocabulary we can use to settle great issues. There is the secular vocabulary and the sacred vocabulary. Whether the A.C.L.U. likes it or not, both are legitimate parts of the discussion.

Another is that while the evangelical tradition is deeply consistent with the American creed, sometimes evangelical causes can overflow the banks defined by our founding documents. I believe the social conservatives' attempt to end the judicial filibuster is one of these cases.

Lincoln's core lesson is that while the faithful and the faithless go at each other in their symbiotic culture war, those of us trapped wrestling with faith are not without the means to get up and lead.

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OhmyNews International Talk Back Board

Subject : New York Times Interview with Abraham Lincoln

Name : cranston36

Date : 2005-05-06 02:03 View : 34 : 0

I read with shock David Brooks column of 5.5.2005 in which he not only dated an incident in the office Abraham Lincoln but quoted the man directly as if David Brooks had been in the room with him at the time.

First come direct quotes from 2 centuries ago and the next thing we will see on the front page of the New York Times will be, "God Says?"

His writing is presented thusly : "On Sept. 22, 1862, Abraham Lincoln gathered his cabinet to tell them he was going to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. He said he had made a solemn vow to the Almighty that if God gave him victory at Antietam, Lincoln would issue the decree.

Lincoln's colleagues were stunned. They were not used to his basing policy on promises made to the Lord. They asked him to repeat what he'd just said. Lincoln conceded that "this might seem strange," "God had decided the question in favor of the slaves."??

David Brooks then shoots into a volley that would take us all to the altar and worship our flag as if it were a God and a lump of marble with the 10 commandments engraved upon it as if it were a god itself ??t won't do that because I don't worship idols.

It seems to me a fitting retort to his pretentious and offensive behavior in this column to bring forth the words of Mr. Lincoln's contemporary, Robert Green Ingersoll who tells the story told to him by a member of Mr. Lincoln's cabinet that Lincoln wrote the Proclamation many weeks before showing it to his Cabinet and when he showed it to his Cabinet he made no such pronouncements concerning Antietam.

David Brooks has not only sullied President Lincoln's memory he has cast aspersion upon the right and duty of the Union and has demeaned the deaths of all the soldiers in that bloody conflict from both the north and south.

Mr. Robert Green Ingersoll further has this to say : "Why are they so delighted to find an allusion to providence in the message of Lincoln? Why are they so afraid that some one will find out that Paley wrote an essay in favor of the Epicurean philosophy, and that Sir Isaac Newton was once an infidel? Why are they so anxious to show that Voltaire recanted, that Paine died palsied with fear; that the Emperor Julian cried out, 'Galilean, thou hast conquered;'" that Gibbon died a Catholic; that Agassiz had a little confidence in Moses; that the old Napoleon was once complimentary enough to say that he thought Christ greater than himself or Caesar; that Washington was caught on his knees at Valley Forge; that blunt old Ethan Allen told his child to believe the religion of her mother; that Franklin said, 'Don't unchain the tiger;'" that Volney got frightened in a storm at sea, and that Oakes Ames was a wholesale liar???

I can answer Mr. Green with this. They (men and women of like mind to David Brooks) can more easily feed at the trough and fill their pockets without really having to work.

In the future I hope that the New York Times will confine itself to quoting living persons and providing direct evidence of events rather than those channeled from past centuries through the likes of David Brooks.

Real Quote from Ingersoll :



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On the 22d of July, 1862, Lincoln sent word to the members of his cabinet that he wished to see them. It so happened that Secretary Chase was the first to arrive. He found Lincoln reading a book. Looking up from the page, the President said: "Chase, did you ever read this book?" "What book is it?" asked Chase. "Artemus Ward," replied Lincoln. "Let me read you this chapter, entitled 'Wax Wurx in Albany.'" And so he began reading while the other members of the cabinet one by one came in. At last Stanton told Mr. Lincoln that he was in a great hurry, and if any business was to be done he would like to do it at once. Whereupon Mr. Lincoln laid down the open book, opened a drawer, took out a paper and said: "Gentlemen, I have called you together to notify you what I have determined to do. I want no advice. Nothing can change my mind."

He then read the Proclamation of Emancipation. Chase thought there ought to be something about God at the close, to which Lincoln replied: "Put it in, it won't hurt it." It was also agreed that the President would wait for a victory in the field before giving the Proclamation to the world.

The meeting was over, the members went their way. Mr. Chase was the last to go, and as he went through the door looked back and saw that Mr. Lincoln had taken up the book and was again engrossed in the Wax Wurx at Albany.

This was on the 22d of July, 1862. On the 22d of August of the same year -- after Lincoln wrote his celebrated letter to Horace Greeley, in which he stated that his object was to save the Union; that he would save it with slavery if he could; that if it was necessary to destroy slavery in order to save the Union, he would; in other words, he would do what was necessary to save the Union.

This letter disheartened, to a great degree, thousands and millions of the friends of freedom. They felt that Mr. Lincoln had not attained the moral height upon which they supposed he stood.
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THE AMERICAN THINKER

Lincoln's Faith

October 9th, 2005

Much has been made of President George W. Bush's faith and devotion to religion since he declared with simple eloquence that his personal hero was "Christ" during a Republican primary debate in 2000. The mainstream media lampooned and criticized the President after author Bob Woodward revealed on 60 Minutes last year that President Bush said he sought "a higher power" than his former-President father in the lonely moments before committing United States forces into Iraq in 2003.

In the current atmosphere of conventional wisdom mocking nearly every form of Judeo-Christian religion and accusing public officials who are public about their religious beliefs of breaching the intent of the Founders, it is important to again look to the past and the thoughts and meditations on the subject of previous Presidents and leaders. Perspective is needed, especially when it relates to the fanatical hatred of President Bush and the misunderstanding many have about his faith.

A study on the religious principles and leadership of Abraham Lincoln, written nearly 60 years ago and just recently published by the late author's son, helps illuminate the thoughts and actions of the sixteenth President during one of the most trying times in our nation's history and helps bring the badly-needed perspective to bear today.

Dr. G. George Fox wrote *Abraham Lincoln's Faith Based Leadership* in 1959. Dr. Fox, who was also a rabbi, desired to show that President Lincoln was indeed "a believer" and used religion and religious belief in his presidency, while also drawing on Dr. Fox's own scholarship to further examine the President's beliefs.

One of the unique aspects of Dr. Fox's work is that it intentionally looked beyond the self-imposed restrictions on celebrated volumes of the day such as *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, which deemed anecdotal evidence of the content of President Lincoln's religious life as incomplete and unworthy of inclusion of any published portrait of the President. Dr. Fox utilized early "utterances, memoirs, reminiscences and interviews" that many scholars to that point hastily discarded, but are prized by contemporary historians. This was a unique method when Dr. Fox first wrote his work, and at times one has to remember that indeed the manuscript was written decades ago, lest the reader dismiss the information within as common knowledge.

Dr. Fox points to conversations Lincoln had with people who in turn jotted down their remembrances. Dr. Fox, for example, points out a conversation President Lincoln had with Gen. Sickles regarding prayer and the battles at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Dr. Fox argues that such conversations are absent from the mainstream studies of Lincoln such as *The Collected Works*, but "vital" in understanding Lincoln's religion and his approach during wartime.

Readers who recall with a laugh the carefully-crafted image of Bill and Hillary Clinton rolling up to church, the President carrying a Bible the size of a law school book will enjoy Dr. Fox's juxtaposition of President Lincoln's skepticism of "pious displays" of religious devotion while detailing his stone-cold knowledge of the Bible and its teachings is craftily executed.

Among others with similar thoughts on the matter of faith, Dr. Fox cites Henry Whitney's observations of Lincoln driving "right straight to the essence and marrow of the subject." President Lincoln's reliance on the private act of prayer is also examined, relating to his "sublime faith" and certainty that the Lord stood on the side of right and Lincoln's anxiety that he was on the Lord's side. Dr. Fox cites reminiscence by Jesse Fell of Bloomington, Illinois, that follows in part:

"He never attached himself to any religious society whatsoever. His religious views were eminently practical,

and are summed up as I think in these two propositions: The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. He fully believed in a superintending and overruling Providence, that guides and control the operations of the world; but maintained that law and order, and not their violation or suspension, are the appointed means by which this providence was exercised."

Perhaps the most fascinating and unique discussion in this book is Dr. Fox's meditations on President Lincoln and the Biblical prophets. Dr. Fox posits that President Lincoln's knowledge of the ethical teachings of the prophets was "phenomenal." Putting his rabbinical studies and knowledge to great use, Dr. Fox profiles "Lincoln's Prophets," who included Moses, Jesus, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Looking at various state papers of the Lincoln administration, Dr. Fox demonstrates that two proclamations for a Fast Day papers echo the burdens of Jeremiah and an excerpt from Ezekiel, respectively. Dr. Fox also shows how the Thanksgiving message of 1864 reads like Psalms 9 and 66. As Lincoln wrote in part:

It has pleased Almighty God to prolong our national life another year, defending us with His guardian care against unfriendly designs from abroad, and vouchsafing us unto in His mercy, many and signal victories over the enemy, who is of our own household. It has also pleased our Heavenly Father to favor as well our citizens in their homes, as our soldiers in their camps, and our sailors on the rivers and seas, with unusual health. He has largely augmented our free population by emancipation and immigration, while he has opened to us new sources of wealth, and had crowned the labor of our workingmen in every department of industry, with abundant rewards. Moreover he has been pleased to animate and inspire our minds and hearts with fortitude, courage and resolution, sufficient for the great trial of civil war into which we have been brought by our adherence as a nation to the cause of freedom and humanity, and to afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions.

Imagine if George W. Bush said that today.

Dr. Fox finally argues that Abraham Lincoln was a modern-day Jeremiah, who both lived in times of great peril and died for their causes. Dr. Fox's use of state papers, anecdotal remembrances and the words of the Bible and Prophets is well-organized. Again, that this work was completed in 1959 yet still holds much value and perspective today is a testament to the craftsmanship and foresight of G. George Fox. In his introduction to the book, Dr. Fox wrote that he wished his writing "to have contributed some light to the study of the religion of Abraham Lincoln." His writing did so – and more.

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Matthew May



